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***Shaping memories: how East Asian
countries shape the memory of the war
through media of cultural memory***

Supervisor

Ch. Prof. Antonio Trampus

Graduand

Caterina Fonti

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RIASSUNTO

L'obiettivo di questa tesi è quello di fornire un contributo teorico allo studio della memoria e del suo impatto sulle relazioni internazionali. Per raggiungere questo fine sono stati utilizzati come esempi di ricerca la Corea del Sud, la Cina e il Giappone, selezionati in quanto nazioni dove la memoria è fonte di tensioni diplomatiche. I tre paesi in esame sono segnati da un passato comune di guerra e colonialismo, nel periodo che intercorre dal 1910 al 1945. La guerra del Pacifico, la seconda guerra sino-giapponese e il controllo coloniale del Giappone sulla Corea sono stati tutti sviluppi significativi che hanno plasmato i tre stati contemporanei. Le tre nazioni sono spesso indicate come al centro di un "problema di storia". Sebbene la storia comune tra i tre Paesi sia contrassegnata dall'esperienza della guerra e del colonialismo, io sostengo che il conflitto nel presente è causato principalmente dalle commemorazioni create da ogni paese. Nella mia analisi, ho ripreso i concetti di memoria collettiva, introdotto da Maurice Halbwachs, e di memoria culturale, sviluppato da Jan e Aleida Assmann. Ho pertanto analizzato la costruzione e la manipolazione della memoria nei tre Paesi, basandomi su tre dei mezzi di trasmissione della memoria identificati da Aleida Assmann: scrittura, immagini e luoghi. La narrazione scritta della storia influenza profondamente la percezione che gli individui hanno degli eventi passati. Pertanto, la scelta delle parole altera il modo in cui un evento storico viene descritto e influisce sul modo in cui le persone ricorderanno il passato. Ad esempio, in Cina la Seconda guerra sino-giapponese, combattuta tra il 1937 e il 1945, viene definita "Guerra di resistenza contro il Giappone". L'espressione scelta è quindi indicativa del modo in cui la comunità ricorda la guerra come un periodo di resistenza nazionale contro l'aggressore giapponese. Il dibattito sui libri di testo nazionali utilizzati nelle scuole è da tempo una questione controversa in Asia orientale. La controversia sui libri di testo ha scatenato attriti tra il Giappone e i Paesi vicini, Cina e Corea del Sud. Ciò indica come la memorizzazione scritta del periodo bellico sia essa stessa un conflitto nel presente. La discussione sui libri di testo di storia è incentrata sullo sforzo dei Paesi dell'Asia orientale di plasmare una storia e un'identità nazionale attraverso la scrittura. Tuttavia, queste narrazioni sono spesso ritenute imprecise da altri Paesi. La Corea del Sud e la Cina hanno spesso accusato il Giappone di descrivere in modo inesatto il proprio comportamento storico, in particolare di minimizzare i crimini commessi nella colonia coreana e le atrocità perpetrate durante il periodo bellico. Le "comfort women", il massacro di Nanchino, la guerra sino-giapponese e il dominio coloniale in Corea, sono gli argomenti chiave della discussione. La terminologia usata nei libri di testo è ciò che più conta

per formare una narrazione storica e, per estensione, una memoria collettiva e un'identità nazionale. Il modo in cui vengono interpretati e presentati gli eventi dà forma a una narrazione che influisce sulla formazione di un'identità nazionale. La narrazione storica cinese è controllata dallo Stato in tutte le sue forme, dalla scrittura alle rappresentazioni visive ai monumenti, il che permette allo Stato di avere il pieno controllo sulla memoria collettiva del Paese. La Seconda guerra sino-giapponese riceve un'attenzione significativa nella commemorazione cinese. Questo evento viene esaltato in quanto simbolo di rivalse nazionale sia a livello nazionale che internazionale. La narrazione sottolinea la resistenza nazionale e il ruolo del Partito Comunista Cinese nel portare la Cina alla vittoria. Di conseguenza, a livello interno, promuove l'orgoglio nazionale e rafforza la legittimità politica del partito, mentre a livello internazionale il trionfo cinese sul Giappone ha proiettato la Cina nell'arena internazionale come attore preminente. La narrazione della guerra sottolinea la colpevolezza del Giappone indicandolo come principale aggressore, e inoltre, mette in luce i crimini commessi dal Giappone e sulla sofferenza del popolo cinese. L'evento cruciale nella memorizzazione cinese è il massacro di Nanchino, che si pone come emblema del periodo bellico e come evento che racchiude la violenza giapponese sul popolo cinese. Il racconto produce quindi sentimenti antigiapponesi. La produzione di rappresentazioni visive ambientate nel periodo bellico è prevalente in Cina. Ogni anno vengono prodotti numerosi film e serie televisive ambientati nel periodo della guerra sino-giapponese. Particolare attenzione viene posta nel ritrarre i cinesi con caratteristiche positive e i giapponesi con caratteristiche negative. Sebbene questi media non siano del tutto fedeli alla storia, vengono utilizzati per promuovere la memoria della guerra nel periodo delle commemorazioni e degli anniversari. In questo modo si mantiene vivo il periodo della guerra nella memoria della comunità. I siti commemorativi cinesi sono costruiti intorno ai valori della resistenza cinese contro il nemico giapponese. Due esempi, sono il Memorial Museum of the Chinese People's War of Resistance to Japan e la Memorial Hall for the victims of the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese invaders. La narrazione predominante è intrisa di sentimenti antigiapponesi, a partire dalla scelta dei nomi che identificano il Giappone come aggressore. Questi luoghi sono stati pensati per ricordare la resistenza nazionale della Cina e per non dimenticare i crimini imputati al Giappone. In Corea del Sud, la produzione dei libri di testo di storia è sotto controllo statale. Il racconto scritto coreano si concentra sul periodo coloniale e mette in evidenza le sofferenze coreane per mano giapponese, ispirando animosità nei confronti del Giappone. Sia la Corea che la Cina risaltano l'aspetto della resistenza nazionale contro il Giappone e questo ha di conseguenza influenzato la memoria collettiva e l'identità nazionale dei due Paesi come opposta al Giappone. In Corea

si possono trovare rappresentazioni visive dell'epoca coloniale giapponese sotto forma di film e telefilm. In particolare, la narrazione coreana si concentra sullo sfruttamento delle comfort women e dei lavoratori coreani. Tuttavia, la produzione mediatica di questo genere non è così prominente come in Cina. La rappresentazione dei personaggi giapponesi è più sfaccettata, ma pone comunque l'accento sulla crudeltà e sul trattamento del popolo coreano sotto il dominio coloniale giapponese. Come in Cina, ci sono esempi di revisionismo storico volti a sottolineare la colpevolezza giapponese. I media coreani fanno inoltre riferimento alla lotta nel presente, per ottenere giustizia e ricevere scuse adeguate dal Giappone. Allo stesso modo, anche i musei coreani ricordano il periodo coloniale ricordando le sofferenze e gli abusi subiti durante il periodo coloniale. I visitatori sono spinti a nutrire sentimenti di animosità e odio nei confronti del Giappone a causa delle rappresentazioni dettagliate delle condizioni di oppressione e delle atrocità commesse dai giapponesi. In questo modo, si sviluppa la componente antigiapponese del nazionalismo coreano. Inoltre, sono stati creati luoghi commemorativi dedicati alla resistenza coreana e alla memoria delle comfort women. Esistono diversi musei dedicati alla memoria delle comfort women che fungono da luoghi attivi di ricordo, in quanto ancora oggi organizzano eventi per protestare contro il Giappone e chiedere scuse. Inoltre, negli ultimi anni si è assistito alla crescita del progetto delle statue della pace, costruite prima in Corea e lentamente in tutto il mondo per ricordare le comfort women. La memoria collettiva delle comfort women trascende quindi i confini nazionali in quanto le statue sono diventate un simbolo mondiale della lotta per il riconoscimento dello sfruttamento delle donne da parte del Giappone. Se da un lato le narrazioni cinesi e coreane sono più polarizzate, in Giappone è più caratterizzata da linguaggio neutrale e distaccato. Gli eventi storici vengono presentati come un susseguirsi di eventi senza porre enfasi in nessun evento in particolare. Allo stesso tempo, la narrazione storica scritta giapponese è stata al centro di critiche sin dagli anni 80 a causa di tendenze revisioniste di stampo ultra-nazionalista volto a minimizzare i crimini giapponesi e mettere in dubbio le accuse mosse da Cina e Corea del Sud. Un esempio di questa tendenza revisionista nella storia moderna è la società nata per scrivere libri di testo Tsukurukai. La narrazione giapponese si concentra principalmente sul racconto degli effetti del periodo bellico sul popolo giapponese, trascurando così di menzionare le conseguenze delle azioni dell'impero giapponese in Cina e Corea. La guerra viene descritta come il risultato delle azioni dell'élite militarista che ha portato il popolo giapponese alla propria disfatta. La storia prodotta è specchio della società giapponese che fatica a confrontarsi con il suo passato militarista. L'enfasi è inoltre posta sul lancio della bomba atomica che ha influenzato la formazione dell'identità nazionale giapponese, legata al pacifismo e al rifiuto della guerra. Le rappresentazioni visive giapponesi

mostrano a loro volta l'ambivalenza dell'atteggiamento del Giappone nei confronti della propria storia: se da un lato troviamo film che parlano della guerra e delle atroci conseguenze sulla popolazione, invitando così ad abbracciare il pacifismo, dall'altro troviamo film revisionisti che mirano a glorificare la guerra e il militarismo e a distorcere gli eventi screditando le accuse di Cina e Corea. Nonostante la tendenza al film revisionista, non si può affermare che esista solo questo tipo di rappresentazione, poiché il Giappone continua a vedere e ricordare la guerra in modo molto più complicato e sfumato, sempre alla ricerca di una spiegazione e nel tentativo di comprendere questa storia tragica. Anche i luoghi della memoria giapponesi sono al centro di controversie, primo fra tutti lo Yasukuni Jinja. Questo luogo è un altare commemorativo per tutti coloro che sono morti per il Giappone, compresi i criminali di guerra perseguiti nel dopoguerra. Le visite dei funzionari governativi nel corso degli anni hanno generato critiche da parte dei governi cinese e coreano. Lo scopo principale dell'altare è quello di ricordare coloro che hanno dato la vita al servizio del Giappone, e le persone scelte per essere onorate sono rispettate e venerate. L'elogio dei criminali di guerra è percepito dalle nazioni che hanno subito abusi da parte del Giappone come un rifiuto di pentirsi e scusarsi per i crimini e come una dimostrazione di orgoglio per il passato militarista del Giappone. Adiacente all'altare si trova il Museo Yushukan, un museo militarista e revisionista che racconta la storia di coloro che sono morti per il Giappone minimizzando il ruolo del paese nella guerra come invasore e aggressore. Inoltre, è presente una statua dedicata al Dr. Radhabinod Pal, l'unico giudice che durante il processo di Tokyo si pronunciò contro la condanna del Giappone come colpevole. La presenza della sua statua sembra mettere in discussione il verdetto del processo di colpevolezza del Giappone. Mentre Yasukuni commemora il militarismo, il Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum è un luogo dedicato al ricordo delle vittime della bomba atomica e costruito come monito delle atrocità della guerra e delle armi nucleari. La memoria collettiva giapponese è quindi divisa nel tentativo di riconciliare il suo passato militarista e il suo presente pacifista. I vari media analizzati presentano tre memorizzazioni del passato distinte e diverse, poiché ognuna di esse è principalmente legata agli eventi legati alla propria nazione. Pertanto, è difficile riuscire a intersecare le tre memorie, poiché si concentrano su aspetti differenti e raccontano lo stesso periodo in modi diversi. In sostanza, le memorie coreana e cinese faticano a coesistere con quella giapponese, rendendo difficile la riconciliazione. Finché il Giappone non esporrà una narrazione del passato che includa le esperienze cinesi e coreane e che affermi chiaramente il ruolo del Giappone come aggressore e invasore, le tensioni diplomatiche sono destinate a ripetersi.

CHAPTER 1

THE MEMORY PROBLEM IN EAST ASIA

The concept of memory

Memory is defined as “the ability to remember information, experiences, and people” or as “something that you remember from the past.” Furthermore, it can also be defined as “the part of a computer in which information or programs are stored either permanently or temporarily or the amount of space available on it for storing information”.¹ In the area of philosophy, memory is regarded as essential for the knowledge of the world and the building of identity and thus relations with other people.² In psychology it is defined as “the faculty of encoding, storing and retrieving information”.³ For memory to function it is presumed that forgetting and fading of memories is essential.⁴ At the same time memories can also be corrupted and modified. Thus, memory storage is not a linear process but rather a complex one made of interactions and subject to context.⁵ When we talk about memory it is important to make a distinction between the two terms “memory” and “memories”: the former is used to denote storage of information while the latter is used to refer to events recalled from the past.⁶ According to Assmann, memory is the capacity that enables people to develop a sense of identity that is tied to time. Thus, memory is the synthesis of time and identity.⁷ Memory differs from knowledge in that it always preserves an identity component. However, memory is a type of knowledge, but it is always the knowledge of the self on both an individual and a collective or national level.⁸ Memory is also distinct from history, which is the study or documentation of historical occurrences, especially those that relate to a particular period, location, or subject. The notion of history may also be used to describe anything that happened or was completed a long time ago.⁹ Pierre Nora argues

¹ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/memory> accessed 17 October 2022.

² <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/memory/> accessed 17 October 2022.

³ Zlotnik G., Vansintjan A. (2019). *Memory: An Extended Definition*. *Frontiers in Psychology*, p. 2

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ *ivi* p.3

⁷ Assmann, J. (2010). *Communicative and Cultural Memory*. in A. Erll & A. Nünning (Ed.), *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, Berlin, New York: De Gruyter. p. 109

⁸ *ivi* p.114

⁹ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/history> accessed 20 November 2022.

that memory and history are two opposing concepts, on the one hand there is memory which is a present phenomenon and is always lived in the present, on the other hand history only represents the past. Memory has a sacred aspect while history aims at demystification. Memory is also within the group and creates its cohesion while history is universal and belongs to everyone and no one at the same time.¹⁰ Langenbacher differentiates between three concepts of memory, history, and myth. He analyses the three different concepts by placing two characteristics of narration as extreme poles, objectivity on the one hand and interpretation on the other. The past is placed at the extreme side of objectivity because the past is obviously an accurate representation of what happened. The concept of history moves slightly away from objective narration because however faithful history may be, it cannot replace and portray the past in a pure manner. Memory, on the other hand, is closer to subjective interpretation as Langenbacher argues that memory possesses an emotional charge and is therefore an emotional interpretation of past events. At the other extreme pole of interpretation is myth, which presents an extreme level of subjectivity bordering on fiction.¹¹ Politicians, journalists, religious and social leaders, artists, educators, intellectuals, and others constitute the privileged interpreters of memory in every society.¹²

The concept of Collective Memory

In recent years, there has also been a growing interest in the concept of collective memory and the ways groups remember together.¹³ In particular, a part of research was dedicated throughout the years about how nations remember or forget their past. Researchers claim that when it comes to countries with painful histories, there is a propensity to link diplomacy with memory, which is to say, to adopt a selected narrative to communicate a specific historic picture for the purpose of accomplishing goals on the global stage.¹⁴ Although nations are made up of individuals, they differ from them in that their memories are created through social constructions rather than a physical process.¹⁵ Institutions that want people to remember are the reason society remembers. Nevertheless, the ultimate determinant of how long memories last is human agency which is the ability of people to remember. Personal memory, which occurs on an individual basis within

¹⁰ Nora P. (1984). *Entre mémoire et histoire, Les lieux de mémoire*, vol 1, La République, Gallimard, Paris pp XVII-XLII

¹¹ Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y. (2010). *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. Georgetown University Press. p. 28

¹² *ivi* p.31

¹³ <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/memory/> accessed 17 October 2022.

¹⁴ Bachleitner K. (2019). *Diplomacy with Memory: How the Past Is Employed for Future Foreign Policy*. Foreign Policy Analysis, Volume 15, Issue 4, October 2019, p.1

¹⁵ *ibid.*

the neuro-mental system of the person, was the only memory that had been investigated prior to the 1920s. Before, there was no concept of a memory that was conceptualized on a social level. However, a study by Maurice Halbwachs showed that memory depends on society and interpersonal relations.¹⁶ The idea that the past is completely present in the contemporary world was one of the concept's principles.¹⁷ A well-known French philosopher and sociologist, Halbwachs is renowned for his work on the concept of collective memory, which he developed in the 1930s and set out in several books, the most significant of which is 'La mémoire collective', 'On collective memory', published posthumously in 1950. Considering the idea of memory in connection to society at the outset of his research, Halbwachs makes the case that people develop their memories while interacting with society or a larger group. Therefore, the process of remembering and reflecting takes place inside society. Memory, or rather the recollection of memories, occurs in connection to other people, — in other words, memory is created within a community.¹⁸ Every memory has interactions with other memories, just as every person has interactions with other people. As a result, each person develops a socially mediated memory that is connected to a community. These communities construct their unity and uniqueness in the framework of a common recollection of history. Halbwachs considers social units ranging from families to whole nations, as well as local and professional communities, political parties, organizations, and so forth. Each individual takes part in a range of these groups, which produces a range of shared self-images and memories.¹⁹ Collective memory therefore views the group from within and aims to provide society with a recollection of the past so that it may recognize itself in every era.²⁰ Memory therefore lives and is maintained in the continuous communication between individuals, but if this communication is interrupted or there is a change in the social context, oblivion which is the loss of memory occurs.²¹ Halbwachs argues that the collective is the subject of memory and remembrance and coins the terms 'memory of the group' and 'memory of the nation'.²² Thus, we may state that the group in inquiry can be a nation insofar as memory emerges both within and because of a nation's society. Individuals consider themselves from the standpoint of the group when it comes to remembering. We have all the resources we need to reassemble memories thanks to

¹⁶ Assmann, J. (2010). *Communicative and Cultural Memory*. op. cit 109

¹⁷ Bachleitner K. (2019). *Diplomacy with Memory: How the Past Is Employed for Future Foreign Policy*. op. cit. 2

¹⁸ Halbwachs M., Coser L. A. (1992). *On collective memory*. University of Chicago Press.p.38

¹⁹ Assmann, J., Czaplicka, J. (1995). *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity*. New German Critique, 65, p.127

²⁰ Assmann, J. (1997). *La Memoria Culturale: Scrittura, Ricordo E identità Politica nelle Grandi Civiltà Antiche*. Torino: Einaudi. p.18

²¹ ibi p.12

²² ibid.

the group we are a member of. External factors that originate from the group help to form and fuel memory. When people connect, societies and memories are formed. Since society is constructed around frameworks for memory, we all participate in memory.²³ However, collective memory is not the real representation of the past but rather is a reconstruction of the past based on the present. While we may be certain that our recollections are accurate, Halbwachs contends that society occasionally forces people to embellish, abbreviate, or complete the events from their past to give our memories a significance that reality did not have.²⁴ Therefore, collective memory is only interested in the legacy and consequences of history as it is remembered and understood in the present and not as history itself. Halbwachs further stress the fact that collective memory is not a mere combination of individual recollections of the past, but it is a reconstructed image of the past in accordance with the thoughts of the present society.²⁵ Nevertheless, collective memory is a continuous action of reproduction of the past or more precisely of an idea of the past. This process is what creates a sense of identity in each epoch. It is what creates the identity of the group and in a broader notion it creates a sense of national identity. Memory enables the certification or confirmation of an individual's or collective's sense of self.²⁶ People's shared memories foster emotional relationships, a sense of unity, and trust by defining who they are and what they stand for today.²⁷ Additionally, collective memory determines and affects not just the “who” but also the “where” and “why” of the group.²⁸ Similar to collective memory, identities are dynamic and need constant production and replication.²⁹ The original perception of historical events is also lost as a result of the constant reproduction of memories across various media and time periods. When previous events are repeated in the present without considering their original settings and epochs, the result is an altered version of the past. A person who lives inside the confines of a society is compelled by the culture to create memories.³⁰ Every part of people's life, including books, textbooks, movies, exhibitions, and so on, is irradiated by a nation's memories. Therefore, memories are a component of the totality of thoughts shared by a group, specifically the group of persons with whom we currently have a relationship. It is sufficient to put ourselves in this group's shoes, to take on its values, and to adopt its point of view in order to remember

²³ Halbwachs M., Coser L. A. (1992). *On collective memory*. p. 38

²⁴ *ivi* p. 56

²⁵ *ivi* p. 40

²⁶ Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y. (2010). *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. p. 22

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ *ivi* p.26

²⁹ *ivi* p.22

³⁰ Halbwachs M., Coser L. A. (1992). *On collective memory*. *op cit.* p. 56

them. Collective memory is characterized by three major features: a temporal and spatial reference, a reference to the group and the ability to reconstruct.³¹ First of all, the contents of the memory must always be materialized in a certain space and time. Memory needs places to survive, just as any group that wants to consolidate itself as such seeks to secure places that serve as symbols for its identity and as a connection for its remembrance. The temporal sphere, on the other hand, is necessary for memory both in relation to remote and past events and to the periodic rhythm of mnemonic reference.³² Collective memory is also inherent in the group and in those who participate in it. Those who participate in it attest to their belonging to the group. Thus, we can say that collective memory is concrete in relation to the exclusive and identity that characterizes the group.³³ The social group produces an awareness of its own identity over time and through a continuous selection of remembered facts chosen based on similarities and continuity. In addition, the group aims for permanence over time, which is why it tends to dampen changes that might otherwise mutate the group.³⁴ Halbwachs in this regard argues that collective memory and history proceed in two completely opposite ways while memory only looks at similarities and continuities, history on the other hand perceives differences and discontinuities.³⁵ Collective memory is also characterized by the ability to reconstruct itself over time. Considering that the past is not able to preserve itself as such in any kind of memory, there is no such thing as a pure fact of memory. Therefore, what remains in memory is only what can be reconstructed.³⁶ The past is then reconstructed in memory by adapting to the present context. Societies do not adopt innovative ideas by putting them in place of their past but adopt new social ideas that are memories of society.³⁷ Collective memory works both backwards and forwards by not only reconstructing the past but also organizing the experience of the present and the future.³⁸

³¹ Assmann, J. (1997). *La Memoria Culturale: Scrittura, Ricordo E identità Politica nelle Grandi Civiltà Antiche*. p. 13

³² *ivi* p. 14

³³ *ivi* pp.14-15

³⁴ *ivi* p.15

³⁵ *ivi* p.17

³⁶ *ivi* p.16

³⁷ *ivi op.cit.*p.17

³⁸ *ibid.*

Collective Memory and International Relations

When we think about collective memory in the context of the state, we do it as individuals and foremost as citizens of a nation, adopting the viewpoint of the group we are a member of, in this case the nation. In conclusion, a sense of national identity develops inside the group due to collective memory. In his book, *Economy and Society*, Max Weber argued that the “ultimate decisive element of national consciousness” is established by a “community of memories”.³⁹ According to Weber, the political community is built upon ties of different kinds, such as culture, language, and ethnicity but at the end the deeper impact is often given by “joint memories”.⁴⁰ For this reason, gaining a thorough and in-depth understanding of how the global stage functions and interacts requires an understanding of how each country has crafted its own memory and identity.⁴¹ International affairs, particularly, and domestic politics have long been influenced by collective memories. Some people go as far as to say that the growing body of international law itself serves as a collective memory of past injustice.⁴² Memory is a potent force that can influence both internal and global affairs. Every part of society is influenced by memory, which is amplified when those memories are of noteworthy or horrible events. The study of collective memory is essential because it has a strong relationship to political legitimacy and power. Collective memory is what gives people and nations a social, cultural, and historical context because it fosters the feeling of identity and shared narrative that are essential for the formation of a country.⁴³ Various techniques, such as monuments, symbols, and written narratives, are used to express collective memory. Together, these techniques produce a particular interpretation of the past that is intended to be passed down to future generations and promote a sense of community based on a shared image and identity.⁴⁴ As a result, with the support of these media, society develops an architecture of memory. In the end, a country's stability is enhanced by its state-produced collective memory.⁴⁵ The Jewish community serves as an illustration of the importance of collective memory since memory is a crucial part of Jewish identity. Religious rituals and national holidays are utilized to perpetuate

³⁹ Weber M. Roth G., Wittich C. (2013). *Economy and society: an outline of interpretive sociology*. University of California Press. p. 903

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ Shin G. W., *History textbooks, divided memories, and reconciliation*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). Routledge p 14

⁴² Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y. (2010). *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. p.19

⁴³ Bachleitner K. (2019). *Diplomacy with Memory: How the Past Is Employed for Future Foreign Policy*. op. cit. p. 2

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

memory by honouring momentous events in Jewish history and fostering a sense of togetherness.⁴⁶ To properly comprehend a country's politics and its relationships with other nations internationally in the present, it is crucial to comprehend the creation and effects of collective memory. It is challenging to locate a political community, among established democracies and nascent ones, between new states and old, where memory does not exert some influence.⁴⁷ Despite this, Langenbacher and Shain claim that the international policy impact of collective memory has not received the academic attention that it deserves.⁴⁸ Countries with a turbulent past marred by injustice, like South Korea, are particularly impacted by and shaped by collective memory. It has an impact on bilateral relationships as well, as seen in the cases of Sino-Japanese and Korean-Japanese relations.⁴⁹ Germany, which has a difficult past similar to that of Japan, is likewise prone to memory problems. In fact, it has also received criticism for inappropriately remembering its Nazi past, by downplaying and minimizing war crimes.⁵⁰ Collective memory may be considered as the main method by which history is brought to life to influence the political culture of the present.⁵¹ Though there have been instances where memory was intergenerational, collective memory is a process that is always being generated and as a result, it does not always preserve its political significance and emotional intensity.⁵² The study of memory in the context of international relations implies that there is a relationship between politics and memory. Governments rely on memory-driven behaviours to accomplish objectives on the inside or the outside. Memories are produced differently in various nations. Memories must interact and coexist on a global scale, but what if they are incompatible? What if these recollections just serve to exacerbate international strife? When nations with a difficult common past interact, current memories of those pasts also interact. Conflicts happen when memories and interpretations diverge and are incompatible with one another. These memories of events are produced and transmitted via a variety of tools and media, which results in a widespread and shared recall of those occurrences. Political science, according to Bachleitner, changed the research by shifting its attention from sociological issues about what memory is to a more instrumentalist understanding of what collectives can accomplish with memory.⁵³ Furthermore, it is interesting to note that collective memory has become the subject of a vast

⁴⁶ Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y. (2010). *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. p.13

⁴⁷ *ivi* p. 15

⁴⁸ *ivi* p. 1

⁴⁹ *ivi* p. 2

⁵⁰ *ivi* p. 14

⁵¹ *ivi* pp. 27-28

⁵² *ivi* p. 28

⁵³ Bachleitner K. (2019). *Diplomacy with Memory: How the Past Is Employed for Future Foreign Policy*. p.2

interdisciplinary literature crossing from various fields such as sociology, psychology, history, and anthropology. However, Bachleitner points out that scholars who focus solely on the link between collective memory and domestic politics tend to ignore the importance and impact of memory-driven political action to achieve specific goals on the global stage.⁵⁴ Additionally, how other countries see threats is impacted by each country's narrative.⁵⁵ Bachleitner proposes a "diplomacy of memory model" that explains how nations use memory to pursue certain objectives on the global stage. Instead of starting with an investigation of how memory-driven politics affect domestic policy, the author concentrates on diplomacy on the global arena.⁵⁶ Bachleitner claims that diplomacy with memory retains the purposeful aspect of foreign policy to attain particular international goals rather than being primarily motivated by the pursuit of historical truth or morality.⁵⁷ Even if it is only a chosen historical image of the country's past, the collective memory of a nation is regarded as the official history of the nation. A nation's collective memory is frequently built on two ideas: the winner and the vanquished, which commonly allude to the outcomes of the conflicts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁵⁸ The categories of victor and defeated altered with the two world wars of the 20th century to incorporate the two conceptions of perpetrators and victims. The distinction is in the issue of reciprocity: the concept of the perpetrator assumes an unjustified aggressiveness against a helpless and weak other and as such rests on its guilt. Because of this, the results of the perpetrator's acts, unlike those of the victor, are remorse and humiliation rather than power and pride. On the other hand, the newly developed idea of victimhood centres on the victim's helplessness and emphasizes absolute misery in the face of violent conflict that is drastically unbalanced. The sacrifice and heroism of the vanquished are opposed to victimization.⁵⁹ However, victimhood was not just the image presented by acknowledged real victims; it was also the image presented by nations that sought to absolve themselves of responsibility for the past by emphasizing their own suffering. This is demonstrated by the nation of Japan, which built its national identity around pacifism and the misery caused by nuclear bombs while simultaneously avoiding responsibility for its problematic past of colonialism and war atrocities committed against its neighbouring nations.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*

⁵⁵ *ivi p. 3*

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ *ivi p. 5*

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

The concept of Cultural Memory

The inherited systems of ideas, values, customs, and practices that provide a particular community a feeling of self, a subjective order, and the urge for meaningful action can be regarded as culture.⁶⁰ Culture is what connects the past to the present by reshaping and keeping current the founding experiences and memories of a society and incorporating them into the present.⁶¹ The connective structure of a shared knowledge and self-image is what holds people in a group together. This structure is founded on a common memory of the past, which represents the narrative aspect, and on a set of norms and values, which represents the normative aspect.⁶² Jan Assmann defines cultural memory as “a form of collective memory” since it is experienced by a group of people and gives these individuals a sense of their shared cultural identity.⁶³ Essentially, culture is what gives nations a sense of national identity. Due to the contributions of Aleida and Jan Assmann, the idea of cultural memory began to take shape in the 1980s. The research of Jurij Lotman and Boris Uspenskij, who created a new definition of culture as the biologically non-inheritable memory of a community, had a significant impact on the two historians. They argued that the past is not always the past and the present is where the past and future are built. The past and the future are both created by the culture that is memory-connected to the past.⁶⁴ Cultural memory is referred to as a set of beliefs, objects, structures, and customs that preserve the past for the benefit of the present and the future. Because individuals define themselves and are defined by their affiliation with one or more cultural groups and traditions, it facilitates information transmission and the birth and development of different identities.⁶⁵ Aleida Assmann argues that cultures “deploy strategies of duration and organize diachronic transmission with the help of media such as written texts and images, preserving the thoughts of prominent individuals and historic events, along with buildings, monuments, and other sites of memory.”⁶⁶ As a result, it is because of these media that memory is eventually kept alive in communities' everyday cultures. Until the nineteenth century cultural memory was primarily defined and influenced by religion and its rites and genealogy of dynasties and the aristocracy. This all changed with the birth of modern nations which on the

⁶⁰ Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y. (2010). *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. p. 26

⁶¹ Assmann, J. (1997). *La Memoria Culturale: Scrittura, Ricordo E identità Politica nelle Grandi Civiltà Antiche*. p. XII

⁶² *ivi* pp. XII-XIII

⁶³ Assmann, J. (2010). *Communicative and Cultural Memory*. p.110

⁶⁴ Assmann, A. (2021). *Cultural Memory*. in Hamburger, A., Hancheva, C., Volkan, V.D. (eds) *Social Trauma – An Interdisciplinary Textbook*. Springer, Cham.p. 25

⁶⁵ *ivi* p.26

⁶⁶ *ibid.*

contrary were characterized by collective history and the arts which were employed to narrate and celebrate the origin of the nation.⁶⁷ Jan Assmann criticizes Halbwachs' theory for the fact that it ignores the cultural components of memory by focusing only on the relationship between memory and the group. He contends that the idea of cultural memory is the key to bringing the three poles of memory, culture, and society together.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, Jan and Aleida Assmann do not seek to replace the notion of collective memory, but rather to incorporate the cultural sphere into the idea. Additionally, they consider the ideas of collective memory and cultural memory to be two distinct ways of remembering.⁶⁹ Furthermore, cultural memory differs from collective memory because it is transmitted by specialists, who can be of many different types, including shamans, teachers, artists, poets, scholars, etc.⁷⁰ According to Jan Assmann, there are six characteristics of cultural memory. First, there is the concretization of identity, which means that cultural memory has a knowledge of what the group is and is not. Second, cultural memory is capable of reconstructing in accordance with each age. Every current setting connects to things in a unique way, even though it has fixed figures of memory. The third factor is formation, which is a prerequisite for the transfer of memory in a society's institutionalized cultural heritage.⁷¹ Obligation, Organization and Reflexivity are the final three components. Regarding the first aspect, cultural memory is dependent on a framework and a specific practice that functions as a sort of nurturing to ensure that it is passed forward. As per the second, the relationship to a normative self-image creates a distinct set of values and distinctions that serve to organize the cultural supply of information.⁷² Regarding reflexivity, cultural memory is self-reflexive since it reflects the group's perception of itself.⁷³ The idea of cultural memory refers to the collection of texts, images, and rituals that are unique to each culture and each era and whose "cultivation" serves to preserve and transmit that society's self-image.⁷⁴ Cultural memory varies from group to group and era to era, but it also varies in how memory is constructed and transmitted, with the choice of medium also being a variable in each society.⁷⁵ Cultural memory is based on specific historical moments, unlike collective memory. The past isn't really the past, though, because it is portrayed in symbols that are enacted at celebrations, depicted in literature

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ Assmann, J., Czaplicka, J. (1995). *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity* p.130

⁶⁹ Assmann, J. (2010). *Communicative and Cultural Memory*. op. cit. p.110

⁷⁰ *ivi* p. 114

⁷¹ Assmann, J., Czaplicka, J. (1995). *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity*. p.131

⁷² *ivi* p.132

⁷³ *ibid.*

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

⁷⁵ *ivi* p. 133

or oral tales, and that are always reflecting a dynamic present.⁷⁶ The period of time taken into account in cultural memory is limited to the past only to the extent that it may be reclaimed as distinctive to the identity of the group.⁷⁷ Societies have a propensity to construct an internal representation of themselves and maintain their identity across successive generations by fostering a culture of memory. The study of cultural memory is therefore an attempt to analyse how societies remember themselves and how they imagine themselves in memory.⁷⁸ Assmann argues that the art of remembrance concerns the individual while the culture of remembrance concerns the group, it is a social obligation that forces us to ask the question of what we as a society must not forget.⁷⁹ The culture of remembrance is a universal phenomenon and is what enables communities to be created.⁸⁰ Israel is a prime example of this, having built both its nation and its people on the essential principle of preserving and remembering the past.⁸¹ As Jan Assmann argues “through its cultural heritage a society becomes visible to itself and to others”.⁸² Moreover, which aspects of a society's past become obvious as heritage and which values arise in its identificatory adoption reveal details about its composition and tendencies.⁸³ The process of remembering within a nation functions in such a way that only the significant past is remembered and only the remembered past becomes significant for the identity of the society.⁸⁴ Furthermore, Aleida Assmann, investigating the relationship between memory and power, argues that one of the functions of cultural memory is political legitimation. Power needs tradition to be legitimized. The people in power in this way, with the help of memory, hegemonize not only the past but also the future as they are celebrated and remembered in the future with monuments and songs.⁸⁵ At the same time, memory also has the power to delegitimize. History, we may argue, is fulfilled and written by the victors but at the same time is forgotten by them. This happens because the victors possess the ability and luxury to select facts and forget what the vanquished cannot.⁸⁶ Along with the category of losers and winners I would also add perpetrators and victims. On the level of international relations, one could

⁷⁶ Assmann, J. (2010). *Communicative and Cultural Memory*. p.113

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ Assmann, J. (1997). *La Memoria Culturale: Scrittura, Ricordo E identità Politica nelle Grandi Civiltà Antiche*. p. XIV

⁷⁹ *ivi* pp. 5-6

⁸⁰ *ivi* p. 6

⁸¹ *ibid.*

⁸² Assmann, J., Czaplicka, J. (1995). *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity*. p. 133

⁸³ *ibid.*

⁸⁴ Assmann, J. (1997). *La Memoria Culturale: Scrittura, Ricordo E identità Politica nelle Grandi Civiltà Antiche*. p. 49

⁸⁵ Assmann A. (2015). *Ricordare: forme e mutamenti della memoria culturale*. Il mulino. p. 154

⁸⁶ *ibid.*

analyse the experience of South Korea, which after suffering the brutal effect of Japanese imperialism, whose intense and painful memory it retains, does not have the luxury of being able to forget the abuse it suffered from Japan, resulting in bilateral debates and conflicts even today.

Media of Cultural Memory

Both personal and cultural memory rely on external items to serve as their memory carriers; hence memory on an individual level and on a social level exists only in constant interaction not only with other individuals but also with things.⁸⁷ Things do not, however, have memories of their own by nature; rather, they carry memories that we as individuals and societies have invested in them, and as a result, they may serve to remind us, assist us in remembering, or even serve as a memory trigger.⁸⁸ Since groups lack a memory and instead tend to create one through the use of objects intended to serve as reminders, such as monuments, museums, libraries, archives, and other mnemonic institutions, external symbols play an even more significant role on the social level like in the case of nations.⁸⁹ As Jan Assmann argues, what is still felt today as a living memory in the future will only be passed on through various media.⁹⁰ Writing, images, places, and the body are the four categories of media or tools that Aleida Assmann considers as being crucial for the preservation and transmission of cultural memory in her book “Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives”. In order to transfer memory of historical facts to posterity, it is necessary for living memory to be transformed into cultural memory that attaches itself to material supports in order to survive.⁹¹ The infrastructure created to preserve memory—which includes memorials, museums, documentation, commemorations, and civil social organizations—is an enabling element in the endurance and ongoing replication of memory as well as its effect.⁹² These media establish and facilitate cultural memory by providing it with material and concrete support and interact with individual human memory.⁹³ Memory mediators, especially in the fields of writing and images, evolve over time following the progress of technology, from parchment to more modern films,

⁸⁷ Assmann, J. (2010). *Communicative and Cultural Memory*. p.111

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

⁸⁹ *ibid.*

⁹⁰ Assmann, J. (1997). *La Memoria Culturale: Scrittura, Ricordo E identità Politica nelle Grandi Civiltà Antiche*.p. 25

⁹¹ Assmann A. (2015). *Ricordare: forme e mutamenti della memoria culturale*. p. 15

⁹² Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y. (2010). *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. p. 29

⁹³ Assmann A. (2015). *Ricordare: forme e mutamenti della memoria culturale*. p. 21

photographs and the Internet.⁹⁴ At the same time, each media has a different and characteristic approach to cultural memory, just as written language fixes memory in one way, images do so in another. The body is a mediator in that it remembers through habit and emotions, which have the dual effect of intensifying and falsifying memories.⁹⁵ Places, on the other hand, possess the capacity to preserve and guarantee memory even in times of oblivion. Places that have important historical significance, such as monuments and ruins, have the power to reanimate or reactivate memory in the same way a place is reactivated by memory.⁹⁶ Aleida Assmann is not the only one who associates places as bearers of memory, but Pierre Nora, a French historian known for his theory on “Lieux de mémoire”, relates the survival of memory with the “places of memory”. By claiming that memory and history are vanishing, Nora critiques contemporary civilization. The places of remembrance are remains; they are the pinnacle manifestations of a memorial consciousness that has barely endured in a time that yearns for remembering but has abandoned it. They manifest, establish, build, decree, uphold by artifice and will a society that is completely involved in its own transformation and intrinsically prefers the new over the older.⁹⁷ As a result, places like museums, archives, cemeteries, festivals, and others create the impression of perpetuity. Societies therefore rely on the “lieux de mémoire” to recollect its past. Furthermore, the first to approach images, that is, cultural objectifications, as memory vehicles, was the art historian Aby Warburg.⁹⁸ Images are a powerful means of transmitting memories and fostering cultural memory and historical awareness. For instance, in Spain the movie “Pan’s Labyrinth” caused a great resurgence of memory discourses.⁹⁹ Likewise, in the US the movie “Schindler’s List” generated in the public and unprecedented level of knowledge of the Holocaust.¹⁰⁰ The means of cultural memory are nevertheless crucial for the creation and nurturing of memory; as a result, they are crucial for a nation's identity and its relationships with other nations.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*

⁹⁵ *ivi* p.22

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁹⁷ Nora, P. (1989). *Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire*. Representations, 26, p. 12

⁹⁸ Assmann, J. (2010). *Communicative and Cultural Memory*. p.110

⁹⁹ Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y. (2010). *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. p. 16

¹⁰⁰ *ivi* p.17

An ever present past

Even though it has been a considerable amount of time since the Northeast Asian region served as the setting for battles and colonialism, the issue of history and memory of past wrongdoings continues to be at the centre of current conflicts. The region is still suffering from a traumatic past characterized by colonialism and violence. These wounds, which are still not completely healed, have developed into contentious diplomatic concerns in the present. Even if intraregional cooperation and connection have grown over time in the region, disputes over memory still occur from time to time. The Northeast Asian region has been the scene of ongoing hostilities and historical disagreements since the 1990s. The violent and tragic pasts of China, Japan, and South Korea are linked, and these tragedies are perpetually present in modern times. There have been numerous instances of this throughout the past thirty years. For instance, the Chinese government was obligated to dispatch 6,000 heavily armed riot police officers to the Asian Games soccer final in 2004 to disperse irate Chinese soccer hooligans who had threatened to attack the Japanese embassy, destroyed the Japanese flag, and harassed defenceless Japanese spectators. Japan's failure to acknowledge and accept responsibility for the crimes committed by Imperialist soldiers in the 1930s and 1940s was cited as the justification.¹⁰¹ In addition, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's trip to Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine in the fall of 2004 caused a stir in Beijing and Seoul. The temple honours the souls of the soldiers who have perished fighting for Japan from the middle of the 19th century, including war criminals. As a result, Japan's demand for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council was met with opposition from both China and Korea.¹⁰² The controversial visit to Yasukuni by outgoing Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on the anniversary of the end of World War II and new school textbooks that aim to advance "patriotic" instruction, were two events that epitomized the year 2006's memory issues.¹⁰³ Even in the present day, debates from the past are still a subject of debate. Japan was startled by the death of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on July 8, 2022. However, among its neighbouring nations, the response was exactly the contrary, with nationalist and anti-Japanese sentiments igniting in Chinese and Korean social media.¹⁰⁴ Abe was a divisive figure for China and South Korea because of its propensity to

¹⁰¹ Berger T. (2010). *Of Shrines and Hooligans: The Structure of the History Problem in East Asia after 9/11* in Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y., *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. Georgetown University Press. p.189

¹⁰² *ibid.*

¹⁰³ Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y. (2010). *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. pp. 15-16

¹⁰⁴ <https://thediplomat.com/2022/07/china-reacts-to-abe-shinzo-assassination/> accessed 20 November 2022.

minimize Japan's wartime atrocities and military ideology. Furthermore, Abe's controversial 2013 visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, also did not help his popularity among Chinese and South Korean citizens. Thus, although the history of Japan's war atrocities against China and South Korea was the core issue, it was the current commemoration of those events that led to tensions between the nations. Abe received criticism for rewriting history, and some even claimed that his death served as atonement for Japan's 1937 invasion of China.¹⁰⁵ Even if China and South Korea's official diplomatic statements were not particularly antagonistic, ordinary Chinese and Korean posts on social media were nevertheless a sign of a larger anti-Japanese sentiment in the Northeast Asia region. On July 18, 2022, South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin met in Tokyo with his Japanese counterpart Yoshimasa Hayashi, with the aim of overcoming decades of past historical disputes and mend strained relations.¹⁰⁶ At the core of the issue lies the troubled legacy of the Japanese colonial rule in South Korea from 1910 to 1945. Japan and South Korea have a particularly difficult history as Korea was a Japanese colony from 1910 to 1945. This historical period was particularly hard on the Korean population and still represents a source of conflict and obstacle for the Korea-Japan relations. Japanese colonial rule was marked by autocratic rule, deprivation of political freedoms and institutionalized discrimination against Koreans in government employment, trade, and other aspects of life.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, Koreans accuse Japan of exploiting women to work in wartime brothels for the Japanese soldiers, and of enforcing forced labour on the Korean population. Over the years, the turbulent relation between the two countries has been characterized by many ups and downs and continued attempts to ease the tension. In 2015, the two countries reached an agreement under which Japan issued an official apology to the “comfort women” and offered a compensation of 1 billion yen to a fund for the victims. In 2018, the then president of South Korea Moon Jae-In opted to suspend the fund and stated that the settlement was not enough to properly address and compensate the victims.¹⁰⁸ In the same year, South Korea’s Supreme Court ordered Japanese industries Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal Corp and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries to compensate South Koreans who were forced to work in the factories during the Second World

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/japan-ex-pm-shinzo-abes-death-celebrated-by-nationalists-in-china-and-south-korea/CJ5O6LKT2XT4JP7CQEEIY673SY/> accessed 20 November 2022.

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/skoreas-foreign-minister-flies-japan-talks-historical-disputes-2022-07-18/> accessed 20 November 2022.

¹⁰⁷ Mattoo S. (2021). *East Asia's History Wars*, ORF Issue Brief No. 436, January 2021, Observer Research Foundation. p.3

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/skorea-japan-seek-reset-decades-historical-disputes-2022-07-18/> accessed 20 November 2022.

War.¹⁰⁹ In response, the Japanese government argued that the question of the compensation was settled under the 1965 treaty which normalized the diplomatic ties between South Korea and Japan.¹¹⁰ Once more, old resentments became the main problem. The East Asian region has been marred by historical controversy for the last thirty years. The majority of these debates have centred on Japan and the effects of its imperial colonization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.¹¹¹ According to Hiro, when people inside and outside of Japan discuss Japan's "historical wrongdoings" (*kako no ayamachi*), they frequently allude to incidents that took place between 1931 and 1945, like the Manchuria Invasion, the Nanjing Massacre, and the military "comfort women" system.¹¹² However, there have been instances where issues with history have arisen between China and South Korea as well. For instance, in 1994, the two nations' relations were momentarily disrupted due to divergent views on the status of the former Kingdom of Koguryo.¹¹³ The controversy was caused by Chinese historians' assertion that the ancient kingdom of Koguryo, one of the forerunners of the present Korean state, had actually been a client state of the Chinese Tang Dynasty.¹¹⁴ As a consequence many Koreans protested in Seoul against the People's Republic of China for what they felt was an attempt at a posthumous annexation of a piece of Korean history. Moreover, Korean parliamentarians who had previously supported China changed their minds and emphasized how crucial the United States remains to Korea's future.¹¹⁵ Every sphere of society in the nations of Northeast Asia is plagued by the past, from traditional cuisine to entertainment. For instance, in 2020 the well-known K-pop group BTS faced criticism for remarks referencing the Korean War, which led to online backlash in China and the termination of business deals in the mainland. The Korean group, according to Chinese people, failed to honour the sacrifices and deaths of Chinese soldiers who served in the Korean War.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, South Koreans charged China with appropriating kimchi in 2020. A side dish of fermented cabbage known as kimchi is a staple of

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/29/world/asia/south-korea-wartime-compensation-japan.html> accessed 20 November 2022.

¹¹⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/skorea-japan-seek-reset-decades-historical-disputes-2022-07-18/> accessed 20 November 2022.

¹¹¹ Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y. (2010). *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. p. 9

¹¹² Saito, H. (2017). *The History Problem: The Politics of War Commemoration in East Asia*. University of Hawai'i Press. p. 4

¹¹³ Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y. (2010). *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. op. cit. p.9

¹¹⁴ Berger T. (2010). *Of Shrines and Hooligans: The Structure of the History Problem in East Asia after 9/11* in Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y., *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. op. cit. p. 189

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹¹⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-54513408> accessed 20 November 2022.

Korean cuisine and is recognized by UNESCO.¹¹⁷ The debate can be seen in the greater discussion surrounding China's cultural imperialism, which is defined as China's propensity to claim the traditions and culture of South Korea as its own, leading to doubts about South Korea's historical beginnings.¹¹⁸ By claiming that most of Korean culture is influenced by China, it called into doubt national histories and identities.

A Memory Problem

Every nation-state struggles to depict its past in a believable manner, but when a nation fails to do so, that failure results in what Barry Schwartz and Mikyoung Kim refer to as a "Memory Problem."¹¹⁹ This idea is perfectly applicable to Northeast Asia's core three countries: China, Japan, and South Korea. The troubled history between the countries involved continues to play a key role in the foreign policy and internal policy of Japan, South Korea, and China. Even though Taiwan and North Korea share the same tragic history, these two countries are often ignored in the discussion due to regional politics. The Taiwanese felt little tyranny despite being under Japanese occupation for the duration of the war, and they no longer harbour much animosity toward Japan. Regarding North Korea, it is considered challenging to study due to its isolation.¹²⁰ It is impossible to argue that these three nations are entirely united, but the distinctions between them—differences in worldviews, moral principles, literature, visual arts, music, and philosophy—are minimal compared to those between them and the Western countries.¹²¹ Nevertheless, these minor differences create conflict and misunderstandings. According to Schwartz and Kim, the Northeast Asian Memory Problem refers to a surplus of trauma memories that prevents countries from confronting the issues of the present.¹²² Internal politics and international relations are constantly affected by discussions of past historical events. These debates are often referred to as East Asia's "history problem" (*rekishi ninshiki mondai*), as Hiro Saito notes.¹²³ The history problem is a complex matter as it involves different controversies ranging from the Yasukuni Shrine to the textbook issue. In this context, it may be more suitable to interpret *rekishi ninshiki mondai* as "history problems" in the plural.¹²⁴ As

¹¹⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/01/stealing-our-culture-south-koreans-upset-after-china-claims-kimchi-as-its-own> accessed 20 November 2022.

¹¹⁸ <https://thediplomat.com/2021/02/a-korean-poet-is-the-latest-example-of-chinas-cultural-imperialism/> accessed 20 November 2022.

¹¹⁹ Kim M., Schwartz B. (2010). *Northeast Asia's difficult past: essays in collective memory*. Palgrave Macmillan. p. 1

¹²⁰ *ivi* p. 9

¹²¹ *ivi* p. 2

¹²² *ibid.*

¹²³ Saito, H. (2017). *The History Problem: The Politics of War Commemoration in East Asia*.p. 1

¹²⁴ *ivi* p.5

Thomas Berger points out, it's crucial to recognize that East Asia has multiple histories problems, each of which is shaped by the political environments in which it is raised, such as the Chinese-Japanese relations and Korean-Japanese relations, and which are defined by the various historical events involved, such as the rape of Nanjing or the Korean comfort women.¹²⁵ Additionally, each historical issue is likely to evolve in a unique manner in the future. Shin argues the problem of history is strictly related to sensitive issues like national identity, the creation of historical memory, and national myths that continue to have a significant influence today.¹²⁶ According to Aleida Assmann, the nations that appeared in the latter part of the 20th century were defined by trauma, violence, victimhood, and injustice. These nations, along with China, Japan, and South Korea, were born with historical scars that contributed to their respective national identities.¹²⁷ The establishment of the modern nation state and the post-1945 attempt to impose universal norms of behaviour through international legal procedures have given recollections of past injustices a special significance in the present setting.¹²⁸ The History Problem, according to Schwartz and Kim, is more about how Asians remember and refer to the past in their interactions with one another, than it is explicitly about historiography.¹²⁹ Furthermore, they assert that because it has to do with how various nations conceptualize and represent historical events, "the History Problem is, in truth, a Memory Problem".¹³⁰ Thus, the issue is not represented by the historical facts as they are but the commemoration of those facts made by governments and political leaders that create conflicts. Therefore, the problem is often constituted by the Japanese government's ambiguous behaviour in commemorating war criminals and adopting an exculpatory tone when it comes to past wrongdoings. Likewise, the refusal of China and South Korea to accept Japan's apology as sincere also represents the problem itself.¹³¹ There is indeed a "History Problem" in the Northeast Asian region as the common history of China, Japan and South Korea is a history of violence and tragedy, but nonetheless what still causes conflicts in the present relations is the memory of those historical events. Historical hostilities have existed for a very long time because accounts of atrocities

¹²⁵ Berger T. (2010). *Of Shrines and Hooligans: The Structure of the History Problem in East Asia after 9/11* in Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y., *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. p. 198

¹²⁶ Shin G.W., *History textbooks, divided memories, and reconciliation*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). p.3

¹²⁷ Assmann, A. (2021). *Cultural Memory*. in Hamburger, A., Hancheva, C., Volkan, V.D. (eds) *Social Trauma – An Interdisciplinary Textbook* p. 26

¹²⁸ Berger T. (2010). *Of Shrines and Hooligans: The Structure of the History Problem in East Asia after 9/11* in Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y., *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. p. 191

¹²⁹ Kim M., Schwartz B. (2010). *Northeast Asia's difficult past: essays in collective memory*. Palgrave Macmillan. op. cit. p. 2

¹³⁰ *ibid.*

¹³¹ *ibid.*

done by enemy invaders have shaped how the nations in the region have perceived one another for a very long time.¹³² One of the main problems in the construction of memory is the fact the countries of the Northeast region focus on different aspects of their past, as Shin Gi Wook states “China celebrates its victory against Japan while Korea commemorates its liberation from Japanese oppression”; on the other hand Japan focuses its historical narrative by honouring “the victims of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki”¹³³. These various accounts of their shared past cause differences and a separation between the three nations. Each country develops its historical narrative with different means. As Mattoo observes “the war over history and memory lingers,” this war however is not fought in the traditional sense but its “weapons of choice are textbooks, shrines and museums.”¹³⁴ The remembrance of the Asia-Pacific War is a subject of bitter controversy in these three nations. When diverse groups, in this case nations, interact, they are likely to discover discrepancies in their memories of the past. These disjunctive commemorations may then turn into sources of conflict and even violence due to the foundations of the groups' collective identities being in danger.¹³⁵ Memory in East Asia is strongly linked to how each nation builds its own identity, particularly after the war when Asian nations had to establish their national identities and lay the groundwork for governmental power to catch up to the Western nations. For instance, Chinese and Korean nationalism made the memory of the struggle against both Japanese and Western imperialism a central part of their national identities, which helped to position them as being opposed to Japan.¹³⁶ All nations, according to Max Weber, identify as such in opposition to other nations.¹³⁷ Thus, the struggle against Japan's imperial control had a significant impact on the development of their unique histories and identities. As a result, there is now a clear connection between nationalism and anti-Japanese sentiment in China and Korea.¹³⁸ Japan, on the other hand, had an entirely distinct perspective on the imperial period and tended to see it as an anti-imperial endeavour. Japanese elites, including many liberals and leftists who strongly opposed the militarist takeover of Japan in the 1930s, saw Japan's expansion in Asia as a heroic war against the imperialism of the

¹³² Berger T. (2010). *Of Shrines and Hooligans: The Structure of the History Problem in East Asia after 9/11* in Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y., *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. op. cit. p. 191

¹³³ <https://news.stanford.edu/2020/08/27/war-never-really-ended-asia/> accessed 17 July 2022.

¹³⁴ Mattoo S. (2021). *East Asia's History Wars* op. cit. p. 3

¹³⁵ Saito, H. (2017). *The History Problem: The Politics of War Commemoration in East Asia*. p. 5

¹³⁶ Berger T. (2010). *Of Shrines and Hooligans: The Structure of the History Problem in East Asia after 9/11* in Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y., *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. op. cit. p. 191

¹³⁷ Assmann, J. (1997). *La Memoria Culturale: Scrittura, Ricordo E identità Politica nelle Grandi Civiltà Antiche*. p. 6

¹³⁸ *ivi* p.192

West.¹³⁹ One of the pillars of the Japanese Empire was the idea that Japan's historical mission was to unite Asia's oppressed people in order to modernize them and protect them from the racist, white, and rapacious expansionism of the Western countries.¹⁴⁰ Japanese perceptions of the causes behind the founding of their empire were unaffected by the reality that millions of Chinese and Koreans under Japanese rule had a horrifying colonial experience that was far from liberating.¹⁴¹ As a result, contemporary Japan began to adopt a historical worldview that was wholly incompatible with that of its neighbours. This widened the gap between how the Japanese and their neighbours perceived one another over the long term.¹⁴²

Why East Asia is haunted by the past

Conflicts from the past continue to impact the nations' diplomatic ties. According to Shin Gi Wook “the conflict was never fully resolved” in the Northeast Asian region leading to disagreement in diplomatic relations still nowadays.¹⁴³ The main issue is the failure to properly and sufficiently address past wrongdoings and war crimes, to move on from the conflict and build new relations.¹⁴⁴ After comprehending the tumultuous past that South Korea, Japan, and China all share, the questions of why the past is still so present in the present, and why the collective memory is so tainted with unsolved concerns arise. Understanding the dynamics of the East Asian region requires knowledge of the relationships between China, Japan, and South Korea. An emerging geostrategic rivalry between China and Japan, as well as an increase in trade and other socioeconomic frictions because of increased regional interdependence, are just a few of the many factors at play. But in addition to these kinds of structural factors, ideational-cultural forces are also at work, which are exacerbating historical conflicts.¹⁴⁵ Northeast Asia's past is defined by the dehumanization and humiliation experienced by China and Korea during Japan's fascism.¹⁴⁶ Japan, in the eyes of China and Korea, not only violated the rights of Chinese and Korean nationals, but also dishonoured and denigrated China and South Korea as nations, refusing to accept responsibility by humbling itself, as it had done to them, through a sincere

¹³⁹ Berger T. (2010). *Of Shrines and Hooligans: The Structure of the History Problem in East Asia after 9/11* in Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y., *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. pp. 191-192

¹⁴⁰ Berger T. (2010). *Of Shrines and Hooligans: The Structure of the History Problem in East Asia after 9/11* in Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y., *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. p. 192

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*

¹⁴² *ibid.*

¹⁴³ <https://news.stanford.edu/2020/08/27/war-never-really-ended-asia/> accessed 17 July 2022.

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y. (2010). *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. p. 10

¹⁴⁶ Kim M., Schwartz B. (2010). *Northeast Asia's difficult past: essays in collective memory*. p. 5

apology.¹⁴⁷ China, Korea and Japan are what can be defined as "honour cultures" which means that compensation for physical and mental suffering "is more difficult, for there is no convincing vocabulary of regret for wounding another's honour."¹⁴⁸ In these nations, honour violations are more poignant since they are associated with feelings of shame. Only the most apparent confessions of guilt and regret may have begun to quell animosity, but Japan provided formal apologies. Regret is a sensation that occurs when you realize that you have done something wrong, and communication is the best method to communicate remorse. Under the influence of Confucian formality, China and Korea continue to have a deep understanding of the differences between ritual, true feeling, and the obvious signs of false performance. Repeated insults and denials from Japanese officials, which fuel allegations of broader apathy in Japan, increase the need for sincere remorse.¹⁴⁹ Japan took its time acknowledging war guilt because it was geographically isolated and had a stronger economy than its neighbours.¹⁵⁰ The sense of victimhood felt by its own people was more important to post-war Japan than demands for an apology and compensation. However, Japan had to face its past as China and South Korea turned into economic rivals in the final decade of the twentieth century.¹⁵¹ Domestically, "memory regimes" that are firmly entrenched in local political discourse and that dramatically contrast one another in how they perceive the past have arisen in the various East Asian countries. These domestic political forces, along with a recent worldwide push for historical justice, have had a profound impact on the East Asian area and ignited a flame of rivalry and hostility over the past. As a result, economic and territorial disputes that ordinarily should be solvable are growing increasingly tense and attempts to establish institutional frameworks that may ease these tensions are failing.¹⁵² As argued by Langenbacher and Shain, memories are mobilizing and myth-making tools, therefore how memories are fostered and retained is crucial to developing and comprehending policy.¹⁵³ Additionally, memories can determine whether a political actor is perceived by other international actors as the villain, the victim, or the liberator on the international arena.¹⁵⁴ In some respects, Japan is an exceptional example of a country that experienced the effects of the war both as a perpetrator and as a victim. The Japanese people's victimhood is symbolized by the atomic bomb narrative, which also mutes outrage

¹⁴⁷ *ivi* p. 6

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *ivi* p. 10

¹⁵¹ *ivi* p. 11

¹⁵² Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y. (2010). *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. p. 10

¹⁵³ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*

over the horrors committed by their government during the war. Somehow, stressing the pain experienced by Japanese people balances the pain they cause.¹⁵⁵ Japanese society has struggled to reconcile the suffering of its own civilians, which is best exemplified by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the firebombing of most major cities, with the memory of the atrocities its citizens committed during World War II, including the brutal occupation of Korea and much of East Asia and Southeast Asia, the Rape of Nanjing, other atrocities in China, as well as the use of "comfort women" throughout the region.¹⁵⁶ The Tokyo Trial, however, was one of the major post-war occurrences that caused several problems. The purpose of the trial was to hold Japan accountable for the atrocity and provide justice to the war victim. But the trial ended up being contentious and is now thought to have created more problems than it had solved.

The Tokyo Trial

Undeniably one of the most important and divisive post-war events was the Tokyo Trial. The conclusion of the Tokyo Trial is sometimes blamed for the inadequate treatment of Japanese war crimes. The Tokyo Trial began on May 3, 1946, with the goal of holding the Japanese people responsible for the heinous crimes committed during the war and the colonial rule. According to Berger, the Tokyo war crime tribunal was an unprecedented event in terms of its scope and ambition, because it aimed to reform and reshape the Japanese people and force them to acknowledge the criminality of the actions taken by their government during the war, as well as to change them from historically highly militaristic society dedicated to the expansion of national powers into peaceful, law-abiding members of a developing international community.¹⁵⁷ Eleven judges from eleven Allied nations presided over the Tokyo Trial, including those from the United States, British India, France, the Netherlands, the Republic of China, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the Philippines, and the Soviet Union.¹⁵⁸ Twenty-eight Class A war criminal suspects were prosecuted, including former prime minister Tōjō Hideki, army commander Itagaki Seishirō, who was engaged in the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in July 1937, and Matsui Iwane, who was in charge of the attack on Nanjing in December 1937.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Kim M., Schwartz B. (2010). *Northeast Asia's difficult past: essays in collective memory*. p. 9

¹⁵⁶ Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y. (2010). *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. p. 15

¹⁵⁷ Berger T. (2010). *Of Shrines and Hooligans: The Structure of the History Problem in East Asia after 9/11* in Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y., *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. op. cit. p. 192

¹⁵⁸ Saito, H. (2017). *The History Problem: The Politics of War Commemoration in East Asia*. p. 22

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*

Class A war crimes, which are defined as actions of planning, plotting, and waging an aggressive war, were a major focus of the Tokyo Trial.¹⁶⁰ To all allegations, the Japanese entered a not-guilty plea. As for the driving force, they gave the Asia-Pacific War's justification as self-defence rather than a conscious choice to engage in aggression, according to Kiyose Ichirō, the principal defence counsel for Tōjō Hideki. In addition, Kiyose claimed that the Marco Polo Bridge Incident was the fault of the Chinese military, and that Japan entered the war because it "had no other choice but [to] exercise its right to self- defence, simply to survive the impossible situation."¹⁶¹ The Tokyo Trial also prosecuted crimes against humanity in addition to crimes against peace. The trial was founded on the novel legal principle that leaders might be tried after the crime for acts related to violations against humanity and crimes against peace that were not explicitly specified by law at the time they were committed.¹⁶² The concept of the trial was flawed from the start since such crimes were not adequately defined at the time in terms of international law, and many of the crimes committed by Japan had also been committed by the Allied.¹⁶³ Throughout the trial, witnesses spoke about the crimes committed by Japan against people in Asia during the war. Due to the substantial evidence presented by the Republic of China's prosecutor, the Nanjing Massacre was the topic of discussion that received the greatest attention at the trial.¹⁶⁴ Despite exposing Japan's war crimes, not all war crime defendants were brought to justice during the Tokyo Trial.¹⁶⁵ For instance, the emperor Hirohito was not brought to trial despite being the active head of state during the war. As a result, the tribunal failed to address the bitterness, anguish, and rage of Korean and Chinese war victims.¹⁶⁶ The US was in the vanguard of the decision to retain the emperor's figure and exclude him from the war crimes trials. This decision encouraged the Japanese people not to challenge the monarch's institutional responsibilities and, above all, contributed to and influenced the public's perception of the war and the country's responsibilities to its neighbouring countries.¹⁶⁷ As Shin points out, discussing East Asia's "History Problem" without addressing the US's crucial role in it is impossible.¹⁶⁸ Since the United States played an

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*

¹⁶² Berger T. (2010). *Of Shrines and Hooligans: The Structure of the History Problem in East Asia after 9/11* in Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y., *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. op. cit. p. 192

¹⁶³ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Saito, H. (2017). *The History Problem: The Politics of War Commemoration in East Asia*. pp. 22-23

¹⁶⁵ *ivi* p. 23

¹⁶⁶ Shin G. W., *History textbooks, divided memories, and reconciliation*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). p.10

¹⁶⁷ *ivi* p.11

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.* op. cit p. 10

undeniably significant role in the Tokyo Trial, many Asians believe that the country is to blame for what they see as the tribunal's partial failure to address Japanese war crimes and for the occupation's insufficient efforts to "re-educate" the Japanese about the history of their nation's colonial and wartime actions.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, the tribunal was mostly made up of non-Asian persons, with no representatives from Korea, for example.¹⁷⁰ As a result, Korea and China believe that the tribunal failed to adequately address the consequences and severity of Japanese war crimes and colonization. Moreover, the United States changed its approach in the years that followed and opted to free and permit those accused of war crimes, militarists, and former collaborators to run for public office starting in 1951 rather than continuing to prosecute them.¹⁷¹ Thus, suspending the sentences led to more dissension and criticism in the nearby war-affected nations, leading to the perception that the trial was a failure. Despite this, Yoshida Shigeru's administration in Japan welcomed the change in direction and freed the war criminals. Additionally, the decision was broadly endorsed by the Japanese people as thirty million signatures in favour of war crimes suspects were gathered in 1953.¹⁷² It was even suggested by some politicians, both from the Liberal Party and the Progressive Reform Party, that these contentious individuals were patriots who were labelled war criminals only because Japan lost the conflict.¹⁷³ As a result of the ambiguous stance of the trial, politicians constructed an image of Japan as the war's victim and of the conflict as one that not only was justified on the basis of self-defence but also helped the other nations by enabling the Asian nations the right to self-determination.¹⁷⁴ In Japan, two distinct commemoration stances on the War arose from discussions around the Tokyo Trial after 1952. Conservative politicians, who embraced the nationalist logic of remembrance and refused to acknowledge the pain of foreign victims of Japan's prior aggression, took the leading stance. The opposition parties, including the JCP and the JSP, adopted a more cosmopolitan stance in honour of the overseas victims of Japan's historical wrongdoings, but they were overpowered by the conservatives.¹⁷⁵ These two perspectives reflected not just two opposed political viewpoints on the conflict but also two different political philosophies. The dominant viewpoint was more focused on domestic policy, whilst the opposing parties were more interested in the wider picture on the international stage. The Tokyo Trial ultimately fell short of its goals of confronting all Japanese war crimes and

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁷¹ Saito, H. (2017). *The History Problem: The Politics of War Commemoration in East Asia*. p. 24

¹⁷² *ibid.*

¹⁷³ *ivi* p. 25

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ Saito, H. (2017). *The History Problem: The Politics of War Commemoration in East Asia*. pp. 27-28

providing justice for war victims. For example, the subject of comfort women, which is extremely sensitive and important to Koreans, was not even addressed.¹⁷⁶

Aftermath of the Trial

The Tokyo Trial was unquestionably a significant event that created an official narrative of the war's history, despite its flaws and complications. The formal declaration of war between Japan and the Allied Forces was made in 1951 by the Treaty of San Francisco. In addition, Japan had to accept the outcome of the Tokyo Trial in order to join the post-World War II international community. In 1965, the US pressured Korea to open up to Japan in order to strengthen its economy and secure the US as an extra ally during the Cold War. As a result, the two countries' diplomatic relations have since been restored.¹⁷⁷ Since China and Korea were not signatories to the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which officially ended the war and settled Japan's duties to make restitution for its wartime actions, the matter of Japan's commitments to those countries remained unresolved.¹⁷⁸ Korea benefited from economic aid from Japan for several years, but despite this, they were never considered as official reparations for war crimes.¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, after the Tokyo Trial the matter of history was put aside. According to Berger, there were primarily three reasons why the historical problem became dormant after 1951. Firstly, throughout the Cold War, the historical issue was neglected in favour of more comprehensive regional plans. Even though Japan's conservative government had revisionist inclinations and refused to recognize its role in the conflict, the United States and China had to put Japan's role as a valued ally ahead of the historical debate. For instance, in the 1970s, China required Japan's financial support, therefore the historical issue was ignored as not critical. Second, Berger contends that the very authoritarian nature of the governments in East Asian nations prevented debates of the history issue from taking place during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Any kind of opposition and the resurgence of the past were suppressed and disregarded. Only a society that values freedom of thought and speech could provide the optimal setting for historical conversations. Thirdly, unlike Europe, East Asian nations failed to form any sort of post-war economic or international security alliance, making it more challenging for these nations to

¹⁷⁶ Shin G. W., *History textbooks, divided memories, and reconciliation*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). op. cit p. 10

¹⁷⁷ *ivi* p. 12

¹⁷⁸ *ivi* p. 11

¹⁷⁹ Shin G. W., *History textbooks, divided memories, and reconciliation*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). op. cit. p. 12

communicate with one another and resolve their past issues.¹⁸⁰ However, as the Cold War came to an end, authoritarian regimes started to crumble and were replaced by democratic administrations, where Asian leaders could no longer dismiss the feelings of the populace over the war's memories. Additionally, a return of nationalism in China exacerbated criticism of Japan.¹⁸¹ The confluence of these new conditions led to a fresh upsurge of historical discussions, and in the early 1980s, Japan was the main focus of criticism. The Japanese government came under fire for allegedly refusing to confront its troublesome past, and disputes over school textbooks and the proper way to honour the Japanese war dead buried at the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo strained Japan's ties with its neighbours in Asia.¹⁸² Long-suppressed inquiries regarding Japan's aggression against Asia started to surface after Emperor Hirohito's passing in 1989, when restrictions on talking about the government's wartime activities were loosened.¹⁸³ Japan's war crimes started to come to public prominence in the 1990s, particularly the horrific incident of the Nanjing rape and the treatment of South Korean "comfort women."¹⁸⁴

Apology Politics

For Japan, building political ties with the governments of the nations it had conquered or colonized was the first step toward reconciliation. Because of this, Japan established official diplomatic ties with Taiwan in 1952, South Korea in 1965, and China in 1972.¹⁸⁵ The road towards reconciliation has been attempted through various means and strategies like apologetic politics, legal action, joint story writing, and regional communication.¹⁸⁶ According to Shin the core obstacle for reconciliation is caused by the persistence of conflicted and distinct historical memories. As worldwide debates over Japan's misdeeds resurfaced in the 1990s, more and more political figures in Japan began to see the need for Japan to fully confront the matter by issuing formal apologies to the neighbouring nations that were impacted by its Imperialist period.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁰ Berger T. (2010). *Of Shrines and Hooligans: The Structure of the History Problem in East Asia after 9/11* in Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y., *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*.pp. 193-194

¹⁸¹ *ivi* p.194

¹⁸² *ivi* p. 195

¹⁸³ Kim M., Schwartz B. (2010). *Northeast Asia's difficult past: essays in collective memory*. op. cit.p. 9

¹⁸⁴ Berger T. (2010). *Of Shrines and Hooligans: The Structure of the History Problem in East Asia after 9/11* in Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y., *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. op. cit. p. 195

¹⁸⁵ Shin G. W., *History textbooks, divided memories, and reconciliation*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). p. 3

¹⁸⁶ *ivi* p. 4

¹⁸⁷ Berger T. (2010). *Of Shrines and Hooligans: The Structure of the History Problem in East Asia after 9/11* in Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y., *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. op. cit. p. 195

Beginning with Kaifu Toshiki in 1990, successive Japanese prime leaders apologized for their country's prior history of aggressive expansionism in Asia. Japan provided compensation to former comfort women as well as forced laborers from Korea and Taiwan. Regarding education, textbooks were allowed to give more emphasis to the darkest aspects of Japanese history, including the Nanjing Massacre, the bacteriological warfare experiments carried out by Unit 731 in Manchuria, and the cruel Japanese counterinsurgency operation in northern China.¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, to further promote the government's efforts there was an increase in the production of television shows, publications, and historical exhibitions devoted to these issues.¹⁸⁹ This time period was characterized by an atmosphere of historical openness to the extent that even the majority of the Japanese people came to believe that Japan's expansion was not an act of self-defence but rather a calculated act of aggression. Likewise, the population began to become more aware of Japan's war crimes during this period.¹⁹⁰ However, there was also a revisionist trend in historical writing that strongly asserted that Japan was a war victim first and foremost and should not be held accountable.¹⁹¹ China and South Korea have criticized Japan for its ambivalent behaviour throughout the years because they believe it demonstrates Japan's lack of remorse for its previous crimes. Despite this, there was progress on the South Korea-Japan relations front with the 1998 visit of South Korean President Kim Dae Jung representing an important development. The Korean government even accepted the apology offered by Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo. On the Sino-Japanese relations front, however, there was little progress. This was caused by a number of reasons including Japan's relations with Taiwan. In addition, the Japanese government believed that China was making political use of history to gain concessions and did not consider the government led by the Chinese Communist Party to be democratic enough compared to the Korean government.¹⁹² Internal fighting inside Japan severely hampered efforts by the Japanese government to display a more open approach toward the unsolved issues of the past. Members of the governing cabinet and other conservative Japanese politicians and opinion makers frequently denounced the government's diplomatic efforts as historically unjustified, needlessly self-flagellating, and demoralizing to the country. Such critiques were regularly cited by the international press, including that of China and South Korea, as proof that Japan's accusations were unfounded. Foreign criticism's

¹⁸⁸ Berger T. (2010). *Of Shrines and Hooligans: The Structure of the History Problem in East Asia after 9/11* in Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y., *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. op. cit. p. 195

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ *ivi* p. 196

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*

¹⁹² *ibid.*

outbursts fuelled Japan's increasing belief that China and Korea were unforgiving when it came to past wrongdoings. By the late 1990s, an increasing number of critics had warned that Japan was beginning to feel "apology fatigue."¹⁹³ Public opinion holds that the Japanese government has not done enough to make amends for its victims, but the government considers its ongoing condolences and material support to be sufficient restitution.¹⁹⁴ According to the actions of the government, the media, academics, and the general public in Japan, there is no agreement on how much harm Japan has caused to its neighbours, how much money it owes them, or how to make war memories less prominent rather than more prominent in people's minds.¹⁹⁵ In Japan, the history debate has a dual character. On the one hand, the government tried to be more transparent and resolve old conflicts for diplomatic and economic reasons, but on the other hand, when it came to domestic policy, the right-wing party heavily leaned on nationalist ideals and denied Japan's responsibility for war crimes. Every time Japan expresses regret, there is a denial, or an offence directed at the exact nations it is apologizing to.¹⁹⁶ A good illustration of this is the distinction in objectives between two occasions: the visit of President Kim Dae Jung in 1998 and the visit of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to the Yasukuni Shrine in 2002. The former displayed Japan's willingness to take responsibility for prior wrongdoings and overcome past issues with South Korea. The latter was aimed to obtain the Liberal Democratic Party's approval. The first showed improvement in Japanese-South Korean ties. The second demonstrated Japan's commitment to not reject its imperialist past by paying respect to the war criminals buried in the Yasukuni Shrine.

The Future of the Memory Problem

China, South Korea, and Japan are connected by a common past, but they are also separated by differing and sometimes contradictory interpretations of that history. These historical narratives are profoundly rooted in society and passed down to future generations through school education, art, popular culture, and mass media.¹⁹⁷ Given the difficulties and burden of a problematic history that continues to influence today, we must regard reconciliation, as Shin proposes, as a process.¹⁹⁸ According to Berger, it is unlikely that the issue will be resolved and go away any time soon and it is likely that the issues brought on by historical injustice

¹⁹³ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ Kim M., Schwartz B. (2010). *Northeast Asia's difficult past: essays in collective memory*. p. 13

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Shin G. W., *History textbooks, divided memories, and reconciliation*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). op. cit. p. 4

¹⁹⁸ *ivi* p. 7

recriminations will worsen.¹⁹⁹ Berger suggests that the fact that memories can institutionalize themselves in the collective memory of a community rather than existing only on an individual level serves as his motivation. This implies that over time, if a country has developed a collective memory, even young people who have not personally experienced historical events might become deeply impacted and incensed by them.²⁰⁰ Additionally, collective memory can be employed to further political objectives, indicating that the history problem will continue so long as there are individuals who stand to gain from the use of memories.²⁰¹ Therefore, the issue with history and memory is not just related to the character of historical events themselves, but also to political leaders and countries that use memory in various political contexts, such as internal or international policies, in order to achieve political goals. Berger does believe that there is reason for optimism regarding Korean-Japanese ties, though, and that the two nations will eventually be able to overcome their dispute. A settlement between these countries might also be quite significant and have a major impact on the East Asian area. For instance, with their joint sponsorship of the soccer World Cup in the spring of 2002, the Korean-Japanese relationship significantly improved. Unprecedented percentages of Koreans and Japanese, according to public opinion polls, had favourable opinions of one another's countries, and 79 percent said they thought the two countries' relations were doing well. Japan saw a kind of "Korea boom" in terms of popular culture. Even the Japanese emperor made a comment about the historical origins of the Imperial family in Korea.²⁰² Berger is less optimistic about Sino-Japanese relations.²⁰³ For instance, China had a significant wave of government-backed anti-Japanese demonstrations in the spring of 2005 in response to accusations that the Japanese continue to shamelessly deny their participation in crimes perpetrated during World War II.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁹ Berger T. (2010). *Of Shrines and Hooligans: The Structure of the History Problem in East Asia after 9/11* in Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y., *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. op. cit. p. 198

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*

²⁰¹ *ibid.*

²⁰² *ivi* p. 197

²⁰³ *ivi* p. 199

²⁰⁴ Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y. (2010). *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. p. 17

Research question and structure of the work

The primary recipients of memory are the single individuals which have the capacity to contemplate the past. However, the collective memory and cultural memory developed in Northeast Asia are the results of interactions between members of the community and collective commemoration. In Northeast Asia, commemoration—the process of choosing from the historical record those facts most relevant to society's ideals and marking them through iconography, monuments, shrines, music, placenames, and ritual observance—and history—the establishment of facts about the past—are the two main carriers of memory.²⁰⁵ The purpose of this dissertation is to examine how memory develops and persists across time. I will draw both on the concept of cultural memory as defined by Aleida and Jan Assmann and on the concept of collective memory developed by Maurice Halbwachs. Three nations from the Northeast Asian region—China, Japan, and South Korea—will serve as my research cases to achieve this. I will investigate how memories are created in each nation. Moreover, I will question if the memory is still a source of conflict between countries of the Northeast Asian region. This research explores the reasons why memory has a stronger impact on current interactions in these countries than in other parts of the world. In addition, I will attempt to investigate the aspects of Asian history, culture, and society that make the past so important and its issues so persistent. I will concentrate on how the memory problem emerges in these countries. I will analyse how each country builds its cultural memory by analysing three media of cultural memory: writing, images, and places. I will attempt to investigate the influence that derives from the combination of these media in the culture of these countries and what effects emerge within the framework of international relations in the region. With the East Asian region in mind, this dissertation aims to provide a theoretical and conceptual addition to the study of memory and its effects on international relations.

²⁰⁵ Kim M., Schwartz B. (2010). *Northeast asia's difficult past: essays in collective memory*. p. 7

CHAPTER 2

WRITING

Writing Memories

The process of producing and preserving words that communicate a message so they may be read and understood is referred to as writing. This action enables the persistent storage of ideas and narratives. Although pen and paper have traditionally been associated with writing, as technology advances, writing is increasingly taking on a digital form. Along with images, places, and the body, Aleida Assmann identifies writing as one of the mediators of cultural memory. Writing makes it possible for memory to be transmitted and mediated so that it becomes lasting and thus reaches future generations. Since ancient times, writing has always had a close relationship with memory, as the written text was considered immortal and able to mediate and transmit memory in a more lasting way than monuments and tombs.¹ Furthermore, writing was envisioned by the ancients as a memory support to overcome oblivion. The scholars of ancient Egypt were convinced that writing was the means to ensure immortality independently of the politics of memory implemented by the sovereign power. In later centuries, the notion that the written text was the mediator par excellence against the destructive force of time persisted.² Writing not only makes it possible to transmit memory and make it immortal, but at the same time manages to breathe new life into the past and thus give it continuity in the present.³ Assmann gives an overview of the tumultuous relationship between writing and memory in human history. At first for the ancients, especially in ancient Egypt, there was a blind faith in the power of writing to transmit memory and make the past immortal. In the centuries that followed, however, this faith waned. In the 19th century, in fact, with

¹ Assmann A. (2015). *Ricordare: forme e mutamenti della memoria culturale*. Il mulino p. 201

² *ivi* p. 202

³ *ivi* p. 217

Thomas Carlyle, a distrust in written paper and the sources handed down from the past began to creep in. Carlyle wrote an essay on historiography in 1833 suggesting that texts handed down do not guarantee reliability. He argued that what we think of as 'history' is actually a "compression of data" and only a small fragment of what has been. Carlyle, however, sees this compression in a positive light as we would not be able to remember and store all historical events faithfully, which would be detrimental to memory, which by nature is limited.⁴ In this way, forgetting and remembering are complementary and indispensable for the creation and survival of memory. It is vital to emphasize the development of technology in the modern day, particularly the emergence of electronic writing and the internet, while considering how writing has the ability to make the past immortal. The transmission of historical events is no longer entrusted to written paper with the advent of the internet but is now achieved through technology, making writing even more eternal and impervious to the passing of time and decay. However, the issue of historical veracity and the potential for memory mediation and manipulation continue to be a concern with the internet and social media. We are going through a new cultural revolution, as Jan Assmann observes, because of the new electronic media that allow for external storage and hence artificial memory.⁵ Electronic writing is immaterial in comparison to its written counterpart and is characterized by a massive amount of continuous information that makes it difficult for humans to understand and discern the veracity of what is read. At the same time, the new means of communication, according to Assmann, with their immense archiving capacity and global circulation of information, challenge the very concept of cultural memory.⁶ In modern times, paper and online writing coexist and are both important in the construction and transmission of memory. Memory is "textually mediated," or "dependent on textual resources offered by others," as opposed to being "grounded in direct, instant experience of events."⁷ As van Dijck points out, multimedia technologies and objects do not only serve the purpose of containing a version of the past but help to construct a perception of the past that influences individuals and the community.⁸ The mediation that derives from memory and media "shapes the way we build up and retain a sense of individuality and community, of identity and history."⁹ The mediation of memory in written form is thus crucial

⁴ *ivi* p. 231

⁵ Assmann, J. (1997). *La Memoria Culturale: Scrittura, Ricordo E identità Politica nelle Grandi Civiltà Antiche*. prefazione

⁶ Assmann A. (2015). *Ricordare: forme e mutamenti della memoria culturale*. p. 237

⁷ Langenbacher, E., & Shain, Y. (2010). *Power and the past collective memory and international relations*. Georgetown University Press. pp. 34-35

⁸ van Dijck J. (2007). *Mediated Memories in the Digital Age*, Redwood City: Stanford University Press. p.3

⁹ *ibid.*

to the formation of individual and consequently collective national identity. The countries of the Northeast Asian region have showed in the past 30 years a profound and persistent obsession with writing history textbooks which demonstrates how deeply nationalistic politics affect historical writing. According to Shin, the Northeast Asian region's obsession with national history, which is based on a single historical memory found in history textbooks, has exacerbated Asia's history issue.¹⁰ One of the most significant ways that memory is transmitted is through history books, which come into touch with people from an early age through education in schools, which is the first social environment that people encounter. Citizens are educated about their nation's history within the setting of the classroom, and the methods employed to impart this knowledge have an impact on both the general recollection of past events and each person's sense of national identity. As Zheng argues in most cultures, history textbooks are considered as "agents of memory" and even as "supreme historical court".¹¹

War over Words

Textbooks are the first physical encounter that every individual has in life with the notion of history and above all with the history and identity of its own country. Controlling the historical narrative of the past allows governments to shape and build a national history, a national memory of the past and consequently build a national identity and a strong feeling of community. Furthermore, history textbooks have been designed ever since they were created to foster a feeling of national identity.¹² When the state has control over the production of history books it consequently has control over the formation of people's national identity and collective memory. The written narrative of history profoundly influences the perception that individuals within the community have of past events. Therefore, the choice of words alters how a historical event is described and affects how people will later remember the past. Words are also indicative of messages and opinions when naming a historical event. For example, different names are used in different countries in the East Asia region to define the wars fought in the historical period from 1930 to 1940. Each name suggests the way it is remembered by the population. Furthermore, each denomination intends to emphasize a distinct component of the conflict, and this aspect is carefully chosen to convey a particular message and further a political

¹⁰ Shin G. W., *History textbooks, divided memories, and reconciliation*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). Routledge. p.7

¹¹ Zheng W. (2009). *Old Wounds, New Narratives: Joint History Textbook Writing and Peacebuilding in East Asia*, *History and Memory*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 2009) p. 101

¹² Duus P., *War Stories*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). Routledge. p. 101

agenda.¹³ For example, in China the Second Sino-Japanese War fought between 1937 to 1945 is commonly referred to as the War of Resistance against Japan. The chosen expression is thus indicative of how the community remembers the war as a period of national resistance against the Japanese aggressor. Additionally, the government of China, under the leadership of Chinese President Xi Jinping, ordered that the war be extended from 1931 to 1945 in textbooks by renaming it the "14-year war of resistance against Japanese aggression" in 2017.¹⁴ Thus, the invasion of Manchuria by Japanese forces in 1931 would mark the beginning of the conflict. This political action aims to honor the Party's role in helping the Chinese defeat Japan and promote the Communist cause throughout the war. The debate over national textbooks used in schools has long been a contentious issue in East Asia. The textbook controversy has sparked friction between Japan and its neighboring countries China and South Korea. This indicates how the written memorization of the war period is itself a conflict in the present. The discussion around history textbooks centers on the effort of East Asian countries to shape a national history and identity through education. Nonetheless, these narratives are often deemed by other countries as inaccurate. South Korea has frequently accused Japan of wrongly depicting its historical behavior, particularly the events of the colonial rule in Korea. Similar accusations were made by China against Japan, who was said to have downplayed atrocities perpetrated during the war period and had not truthfully remembered it. In particular, the Japanese government has generated criticism for its tendency of minimizing the brutality of the actions of the Imperial Army in the textbooks. The "comfort women", the Nanjing massacre, as well as the Sino-Japanese war and the colonial rule in Korea, are the key topics in the discussion. Since the 1980s, history textbooks generated several crises throughout the years until nowadays. During this period began what Sneider described as "the war over words".¹⁵ In 1981, during the textbook authorisation, paragraphs concerning the Japanese invasion in China and its colonial rule in Korea sparked criticism in the East and Southeast Asian countries, leading into the so-called 1982 Textbook Controversy (*1982-nen rekishi kyokasho mondai*).¹⁶ During the screening development for new history schoolbooks the Japanese Ministry of Education specified that some words used to describe Japanese military operations in China be replaced. For instance, when talking about the Second Sino-Japanese war, it was requested of the authors

¹³ *ivi* p. 102

¹⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/jan/13/china-rewrites-history-books-to-extend-sino-japanese-war-by-six-years> accessed 27 January 2023.

¹⁵ Sneider D.C., *The War over Words*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). Routledge. p. 246

¹⁶ Miyake A., *Rewriting history in a textbook in contemporary Japan*, in Müller G. (2011). *Designing history in East Asian textbooks: identity politics and transnational aspirations*. Routledge pp. 166-167

to substitute the phrase “invasion” (*shinryaku* 侵略) with “advance” (*shinshutsu* 進出).¹⁷ It was preferred to use a less specific term to describe how the Japanese behaved in China since defining their activities as aggression would have implied criminality.¹⁸ Likewise, the violent events surrounding the “Nanjing massacre” were downplayed as the result of hectic circumstances rather than the deliberate behaviour of the Japanese soldiers.¹⁹ There were also criticisms on the way the colonial era in Korea was described. As Duus notes, the terminology used in the textbooks is what is most important in forming a historical narrative and, by extension, a collective memory and national identity.²⁰ It is not the facts that matter; it is how they are interpreted and presented that shapes a story, a narrative, and ultimately the history of a country. The events that are recounted, however, are frequently not all included but rather are selected only for the purpose of supporting the historical narrative that each nation has chosen to present.²¹ The fact generated international scrutiny and interest over the content of Japanese textbooks. As a response, the governments of China and South Korea expressed their discontent by filing formal complaints to the Japanese government. Similarly, protests over the misrepresentation of historical facts arose also in other Asian country such as Hong Kong, North Korea and Vietnam.²² The Japanese government was astonished by the international upheaval and thus the Suzuki Zenkō administration found itself forced to take action by issuing an apology and adding a “Neighbouring Country Clause” (*kinrin shokoku jōkō*).²³ The clause required that the history books gave adequate attention to the past relations of Japan with its nearby countries, in pursuance of international cooperation. In this regard, the Chief Cabinet Secretary Kiichi Miyazawa stated that the content of Japanese textbooks is a matter of international interest and as such the views and criticism of other countries in particular the Chinese and Korean governments should be taken into consideration.²⁴ From then on, the clause was included into the guidelines for the development of history textbooks with the aim of

¹⁷ Guex S. (2015). *The History Textbook Controversy in Japan and South Korea*, *Cipango - French Journal of Japanese Studies*, 4. p.1

¹⁸ Sneider D. C., *The War over Words*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). Routledge p. 249

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ Duus P., *War Stories*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). *op. cit.* p. 102

²¹ *ivi* p. 103

²² Sneider D. C., *The War over Words*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). *op. cit.* p. 249

²³ Guex S. (2015). *The History Textbook Controversy in Japan and South Korea*. *op. cit.* p. 1

²⁴ Sneider D. C., *The War over Words*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). *op. cit.* p. 249

preventing diplomatic conflicts.²⁵ However, Sneider contends that Japan has not always been consistently implementing the clause.²⁶ In addition to this, the South Korean government required modification of nineteen statements regarding Japan's colonial government in Korea in the textbooks. To which Japan agreed and committed to change at least fifteen phrases.²⁷ Therefore, the provision gave the possibility to the Asian nations to protest and dispute the content of Japanese textbooks. Nevertheless, in 1986, with a new textbook draft, there was a resurgence of criticism and a demand for adjustments originating from China and South Korea, despite the existence of the clause.²⁸ Japan experienced a surge of historical self-reflection following Emperor Hirohito's passing in 1989. In the 1990s, former military comfort women in Korea who had been sexually exploited by Japan during the war came forth to share their stories. Therefore, Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono Yohei acknowledged the practice. The system of sexual exploitation employed by the Japanese empire during the war also started to be mentioned in Japanese schoolbooks published between 1992 and 1996.²⁹ Following this, when the conservative LDP party came back to power in Japan in 1996, there were complaints by parliamentarians calling for the removal of references to comfort women.³⁰ In 2001, the tension reached another peak after the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho, also called Tsukuru-kai) published a new nationalist textbook.³¹ The group is accused by academics of employing historical textbook rewriting to downplay Japan's responsibility for its wartime activities. The invasion of the Korean peninsula is described in the textbook as an uncontested annexation that was vital for Japan's security which scholars claim gives a misleading and self-serving portrayal of Japan's colonial and wartime efforts.³² Guex argues that by portraying recent Japanese conflicts as defensive or by emphasizing the largely good results of these wars, the colonization of Taiwan, and the annexation of Korea, the book presented the most conservative right-wing interpretation of history.³³ Under the direction of professor and academic Fujioka Nobukatsu, the organization known as the Tsukurukai was

²⁵ Miyake A., *Rewriting history in a textbook in contemporary Japan*, in Müller G. (2011). *Designing history in East Asian textbooks: identity politics and transnational aspirations*. p.167.

²⁶ Sneider D. C., *The War over Words*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). op. cit. p. 249

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ ²⁸ Miyake A., *Rewriting history in a textbook in contemporary Japan*, in Müller G. (2011). *Designing history in East Asian textbooks: identity politics and transnational aspirations*. op. cit. p. 167

²⁹ Sneider D. C., *The War over Words*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). p. 251

³⁰ *ivi* p. 252

³¹ Guex S. (2015). *The History Textbook Controversy in Japan and South Korea*. op. cit. p. 1

³² Zheng W. (2009). *Old Wounds, New Narratives: Joint History Textbook Writing and Peacebuilding in East Asia*. p. 102

³³ Guex S. (2015). *The History Textbook Controversy in Japan and South Korea*. op. cit. p. 1

established in 1996. The group reasoned that a past that one cannot be proud of cannot establish a country, therefore they set out to write in a new history book in a way that would portray a less masochistic and remorseful picture of the past.³⁴ Even though the book was only adopted by a tiny majority of schools the case provoked once again the uproar of nearby countries.³⁵ The way the history textbook presented Japan's imperial past sparked outrage both within Japan and in Korea, China, and other Asian nations. Similar to the 1982 textbook, it referred to the war in Asia as a "advancement" rather than an invasion, downplayed the number of casualties by referring to the "Nanjing incident," omitted all mentions of the comfort women, and highlighted the advantages of Japan's colonial rule over Korea and other parts of Asia.³⁶ South Korean government criticized the attempt of the Tsukurukai of putting the blame on Korea for the period of colonisation. The response is also largely shared by the Korean population as several associations against Japanese textbooks were created in the latest years.³⁷ The majority of Korea's concerns centred on claims that were ambiguous in its wording. For instance, while describing the annexation of Korea the Tsukurukai wanted to highlight the fact that there were some Koreans in favour of the occupation.³⁸ In this portrayal, the annexation of Korea is not described as an invasion, or a coercive act but rather as a necessity for Korea's survival and development, as well as something desired by a certain number of Koreans. The decision to focus on the need and necessity for the invasion of Korea is an attempt to change the narrative. As a result, the book minimizes the brutality of the colonization and emphasizes the benefits of the invasion. The choice of words is a powerful tool for manipulating the narrative and the memory of historical events. Colonization is one of the fundamental reasons for Korea's hostility toward Japan, thus the omission of any reference to "comfort women" was one of the main issues of Japanese textbooks. The question of "comfort women" has gained more and more attention in Korea during the 1990s. The topic of comfort women is extremely sensitive and problematic, and it is thought to be the most obvious example of the brutality that occurred during the colonization of Korea. For instance in 1996, all junior high school textbooks used the word "comfort women," but by 2001 and 2006, only three and one, respectively, did.³⁹ The writers of the book revised the language in response to criticism from the Chinese and South

³⁴Sneider D. C., *The War over Words*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). op. cit. p. 252

³⁵ Gueux S. (2015). *The History Textbook Controversy in Japan and South Korea*. op. cit. p. 1

³⁶ Sneider D. C., *The War over Words*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). op. cit. p. 252

³⁷ Gueux S. (2015). *The History Textbook Controversy in Japan and South Korea*. op. cit. p. 1

³⁸ *ivi* p. 3

³⁹ *ivi* p. 8

Korean governments before publishing it. Among the adjustments were allusions to the Nanjing massacre and the Korean resistance.⁴⁰ Despite this, comfort women were still not mentioned, and the rhetoric employed gave the impression that the war was justified. South Korea and China both filed protests in response. Another history book from the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform was published in 2005, and it sparked anti-Japanese demonstrations in China and South Korea. Protests started two weeks after the textbook was approved in more than 10 Chinese towns. During the demonstration, participants demanded "Japan must apologize to China" and "Boycott Japanese goods" while burning Japanese flags and carrying banners.⁴¹ Furthermore, 10,000 to 20,000 Chinese protesters marched to the Japanese embassy in Beijing and pelted it with stones. Moreover, in South Korea the new textbook sparked outrage and protests as the book underlined the legitimacy of Japan's claim to the islands of Dokdo.⁴² Thus, the publishing of the new book has heightened existing divisive problems between Japan and South Korea, such as the dispute over the islands in the Sea of Japan that are halfway between Korea and Japan. These islands are the subject of a dispute between the two countries since each assert their sovereignty over them and refer to them by different names—for the Japanese, they are known as the Takeshima Islands, while the Koreans refer to them as the Dokdo Islands. Conflicting historical narratives that affect the collective memory of the nations in the Northeast Asian area are therefore expressed again through textbook dispute. It is an indication of a past that is challenging to recount and recall in a way that promotes peace amongst nations. As a result, the conflict continues to remain present today due to the words used to describe the past and shape how society as a whole perceives it. It is a dispute driven on by both domestic and international policies aimed at strengthening national identities. Each country therefore emphasizes different aspects of the past according to political goals.

China

In China, history textbooks must adhere to core government policies, and the Ministry of Education takes a more active part in the textbook-writing process.⁴³ Nevertheless, the final objective "of history education in the People's Republic of China is to stimulate patriotic feeling

⁴⁰ Sneider D. C., *The War over Words*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). op. cit. p. 253

⁴¹ Zheng W. (2009). *Old Wounds, New Narratives: Joint History Textbook Writing and Peacebuilding in East Asia*. op.cit. p. 102

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ Shin G. W., *History textbooks, divided memories, and reconciliation*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). Routledge. op. cit. p. 7

and consolidate the national identity of the students”.⁴⁴ Having direct state control over the written narrative of the past ensures that the collective memory of the Chinese people is guided and birthed by the ideology of the Chinese Communist Party. Chinese textbooks place a strong emphasis on national "resistance" and "liberation" against Japan. Similarly, also South Korean textbooks stress this aspect. In the history of the Chinese nation and people, the fight against the Japanese occupies a significant and central place.⁴⁵ As Li notes, China treats the Second Sino-Japanese War, also known as the War of Resistance against Japan (kangri zhanzheng), differently from other nations.⁴⁶ While it is typically regarded as a part of World War II, in China it is treated as a distinct event to ensure that it receives adequate and thorough coverage. This is given by the fact that the conflict is considered important as it marks the first victory of the Chinese nation in the modern Chinese history. Moreover, the Chinese victory is significant as the end of the century of humiliation and brought China onto the international stage.⁴⁷ Therefore, much importance and space are devoted to the narrative of the conflict. The way the fight is portrayed in Chinese textbooks demonstrates how it can strengthen national identity. The narrative framework is a story of struggle and freedom that culminates in the victory of the Chinese people/nation. Moreover, China is depicted as having triumphed not only over Japanese invasion but also over the United States. The narrative is overly patriotic and triumphalist highlighting the CCP's leadership as the sole cause of both victories and expressly endorses the use of force as a tactic of resistance. Additionally, it fosters a sense of patriotism by portraying Japan and the United States as China's historical rivals, which also reflects how Chinese people feel about the United States nowadays.⁴⁸ In this regard, Chinese books emphasize the Korean War as a continuation of the battle against fascism by pointing to the United States as the enemy. Therefore, the Sino-Japanese conflict has significant historical significance to China, and PRC textbooks extensively discuss it. In comparison, however, the Japanese books present a less detailed version of the conflict and focus on the nobility aspect of defeat.⁴⁹ For the first time in the country's several battles of resistance against foreign aggression, the nation was successful in the War of Resistance against Japan. Furthermore,

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ Duus P., *War Stories*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). p. 105

⁴⁶ Li W., *International wars in Chinese secondary school history textbooks, 1931-1951*, in Shin G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). Routledge. p. 140

⁴⁷ Duus P., *War Stories*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). *op. cit.* p. 105

⁴⁸ *ivi* p.109

⁴⁹ Zheng W. (2009), *Old Wounds, New Narratives: Joint History Textbook Writing and Peacebuilding in East Asia*. pp.104-105

China's War of Resistance against Japan occupies a prominent position due to its role in the success of the worldwide war against fascism.⁵⁰ The conflict is extensively chronicled and portrayed in Chinese writings as an aggressive war that the Japanese started on purpose.⁵¹ China claimed that Japan's ultimate objective was to begin a more extensive expansion in Asia.⁵² The Sino-Japanese War is described as having been started by Japan in textbooks written in countries outside of China, including Japan, South Korea, and the United States, but the main justification given for the invasion is the 1930s economic crisis, which led to Japan's attempt to seize China's natural resources.⁵³ Chinese textbooks consequently tend to place greater emphasis on the political goals driving the aggression, whereas textbooks from Japan, the United States, and South Korea place more emphasis on the economic drivers of Japan's behaviour.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Japanese military crimes are also given significant space in Chinese textbooks. Thus, references to bombings and the Nanjing massacre, which has been deemed as the pinnacle of human cruelty, are addressed.⁵⁵ The selected wording incites hostility toward Japan and denounces the actions of the Japanese army, characterizing it as brutal and vicious. As a result, the brutal imperial army and the noble Chinese resistance serve as a contrast to describe the wartime period. Chinese textbooks also emphasize the "brutal economic looting" of the nation, which includes the appropriation of land, the purchase of agricultural products at extortionate prices, the establishment of manufacturing control, the raising of taxes, the robbery of banks, and the issuance of an inflationary fiat currency.⁵⁶ The wealth of the country and the independence of the Chinese people are claimed to have been stolen by the Japanese troops. Additionally, Chinese textbooks place a strong emphasis on the Chinese Communist Party's crucial contribution to the Chinese people's triumph against the Japanese. This strategy is a part of the effort to promote the Communist Party's political legitimacy and, in turn, to denigrate the Guomintang Nationalist Party and its role in the fight against Japan. Because of this, references to Guomintang's involvement in the struggle are increasingly disappearing in new textbook editions.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ Li W., *International wars in Chinese secondary school history textbooks, 1931-1951*, in Shin G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). op. cit. p. 140

⁵¹ *ivi* p. 142

⁵² *ivi* p. 143

⁵³ *ivi* op. cit. p. 142

⁵⁴ *Ivi* op. cit. p. 143

⁵⁵ Duus P., *War Stories*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). p. 107

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ *ivi* pp. 107-108

Japan

Japanese history textbooks do not place a strong emphasis on the depiction of the conflict as those from China and South Korea do. The tone of Japanese textbooks is subdued, neutral, and almost bland. Duus hypothesizes that this may be the cause of China's and South Korea's critiques and enmity.⁵⁸ The way that the Japanese imperial era is depicted in Japanese books is in fact the subject of criticism and international examination. The Japanese tendency to downplay atrocities done by the military, such as the Nanjing Massacre, the exploitation of laborers, and the sexual exploitation of military comfort women, is the main criticism raised by China and South Korea. As discussed previously, the narrative of Japanese literature frequently leads to confrontation with neighbouring nations. Since the School Education Law was passed in Japan in 1948, Japanese government has not been directly involved in the publication of school history books. Nevertheless, the Textbook Authorisation and Research Council, a body established by the Ministry of Education, requires the authors of history textbooks to submit the manuscripts for review.⁵⁹ This process guarantees that the Ministry of Education has control over textbook material before it is published. Even though, this system seems to guarantee a much scrupulous scrutiny and control over the content of the books there is a central issue that must be taken into account. Moreover, the nomination of the examiners, who are often university professors or lecturers, are hired on the advice of prior examiners in accordance with criteria that are still nebulous and cast doubt on the examiners' objectivity.⁶⁰ The army is the main character in Japanese historical accounts of the wartime era, and it is portrayed in various manners depending on political ideology. While the Tsukurukai's works offer an extreme nationalist account of the events that exalts the war and downplays the crimes of the Imperial Japanese Army, it is also feasible to discover narratives that are more subdued but nevertheless nationalist in tone. For instance, the 2002 book Yamakawa recounted the story of a prosperous and harmonious Japan in the 1920s that was led astray by the military elite and right-wing civilians, in the 1930s, with aggressive policies that resulted in a national catastrophe but ultimately atoned for its mistakes in the post-war era by becoming a peaceful player on the world stage. According to this interpretation, the Sino-Japanese War resulted from an upsurge of anti-imperialist nationalist sentiments in China that endangered Japanese interests. As a

⁵⁸ *ivi* p.110

⁵⁹ Guex S. (2015). *The History Textbook Controversy in Japan and South Korea*. *op. cit.* p. 3

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

result, the Japanese military acted independently of the government.⁶¹ The military is listed as the main protagonist and culprit in the narrative of all the focal events of the war such as alliance with Nazi Germany, Pearl Harbor, and the Nanjing massacre.⁶² Despite this, the descriptions of the Nanjing massacre of civilians and the methods of the Unit 731 laboratory, which are referenced in the footnotes rather than the main text, are given little room in the textbooks. On the other hand, emphasis is placed on the challenges experienced by Japanese soldiers and citizens during the war.⁶³ The 2002 book Yamakawa also describes the dropping of the atomic bomb as a pivotal event in ending the war accompanied by Emperor Hirohito's declaration of surrender described as a divine choice.⁶⁴ As a result, there is no attempt in this rendition to explain or justify the conflict. The recounting of the events is straightforward and blunt. On the other side, the same events are described in the 2007 Tokyo shoseki textbook, but this time greater emphasis is placed on the cruelty of the Japanese army throughout the war and in the colonies, leading to a more thorough account of the Nanjing massacre and the comfort women.⁶⁵ As a result, the nationalist feelings and pride brought on by the war's success permeate China's war narrative, whereas Japan exhibits an ambiguous and challenging relationship with its military past. As was already noted, history textbooks are crucial to the development of the history of the country and, consequently, of the citizens' sense of national identity. Because of this, Duus contends that it is difficult for Japan to create a narrative that inspires national pride about a past defined by defeat and that Japanese society still finds difficult to understand.⁶⁶ While China and South Korea have developed historical narratives that primarily highlight the wrongdoings committed by the Japanese army during the war and colonial era and establish national identity as the antithesis of Japanese identity, Japan's narrative places a greater emphasis on the atomic bomb as the decisive moment in the conflict than on the atrocities committed by the military.⁶⁷ This has caused the development of a Japanese identity that is primarily tied to victimization, rejection of war, and embrace of pacifism.

⁶¹ Duus P., *War Stories*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). p. 111

⁶² *ibid.*

⁶³ *ivi* p. 112

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

⁶⁶ *ivi* p.113

⁶⁷ Zheng W. (2009). *Old Wounds, New Narratives: Joint History Textbook Writing and Peacebuilding in East Asia*. p. 109

South Korea

Differently from Japan, the Korean government holds full control over the textbooks.⁶⁸ The state's influence over the educational system was tightened during the Pak Chonghui presidency, and the previously used authorisation procedure was dropped in favour of the publication of a single national history book.⁶⁹ Although a system of book examination and approval was reinstated in 2002 with regard to books on the modern era, just two textbooks are employed, giving students a comparatively biased picture of history. Due to this, the historical depiction of events in Korean writing is criticized in Japan, primarily by right-wing revisionists which have disapproved how the South Korean government pushes one national single version of history.⁷⁰ In the course of creating a modern nation, Koreans emphasized the distinction and purity of the Korean people and created nationalist historiography in order to combat the Japanese colonialism perspective.⁷¹ Even though Japanese government has never openly criticized the content of Korean history manuals, right-wing academics have indicated that the depiction of historical facts presents “an overly nationalistic perspective” and “a simplistic portrayal of Japan, which is described essentially as an aggressor or a diligent student that absorbed Korea’s advanced culture over hundreds of years”.⁷² The textbooks do not illustrate a unbiased version of the historical facts but clearly display an “anti-Japanese” sentiment. The construction of the national identities of South Korea and China was influenced by historical occurrences like the war and colonialism. The struggle against Japan served as the cornerstone on which both nations developed their sense of national and individual identity. Looking at Korean textbooks, where Japan plays a significant role in the contemporary history of Korea, makes this point quite evident. In contrast, Korea is depicted in Japanese textbooks to a considerably smaller extent, demonstrating that Korea is not as influential in the formation of Japanese national identity and memory as Japan is for Korea.⁷³ One could argue that the scope and severity of the two historical manipulation are not on the same level, considering the history of the two countries. At the same time, however, it is important to remember that the controversy is not one-sided but is also present outside Japan. The manipulation of historical facts in the construction of a collective narrative and memory is an asset present in nationalist

⁶⁸ Guex S. (2015). *The History Textbook Controversy in Japan and South Korea*. p.4

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁷¹ Shin G. W., *History textbooks, divided memories, and reconciliation*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). Routledge. op. cit. p. 7

⁷² Guex S. (2015). *The History Textbook Controversy in Japan and South Korea*. pp. 1-2

⁷³ Shin G. W., *History textbooks, divided memories, and reconciliation*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). Routledge. p. 14

politics in both Japan, Korea, and China. However, as Duus points out, it is not helpful in the conversation to criticize a textbook because it presents a "nationalistic" or subjective account of history.⁷⁴ History textbooks are purposely "organized around the narrative or story of a nation".⁷⁵ The history of the nation and the state is taught in textbooks that were written and printed with state approval, and this historical account was carefully chosen and approved by the government. History textbooks are used to educate students about a nation's past to help them become citizens and strengthen national identity. A sense of belonging, a sense of place in the world, and a sense of community are all products of a common history. Thus, history textbooks unmistakably portray a patriotic past. Similarly, Zheng suggests that the creation of a national narrative is a key function of history textbooks.⁷⁶ As Chung points out, the Asia-Pacific War is not a topic that is specifically covered in Korean history textbooks.⁷⁷ Different aspects are highlighted differently in the storytelling in Japan and South Korea. The living conditions of Koreans in colonial Korea are a major topic in Korean textbooks. However, although the events of the war are covered in great depth in Japanese history textbooks, colonial Korea is only mentioned briefly.⁷⁸ Japanese books tend to give less attention to the circumstances and treatment of the colonial territories and instead concentrate the narrative on how the war's events affected the Japanese people. According to Chung, it is evident from an examination of the descriptions provided in these textbooks that Korean and Japanese students would struggle to reach an understanding of the War that is similar.⁷⁹

Comparison between textbooks

A study conducted by Stanford University analysed high school history textbooks in China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the United States under the title "Divided Memories: History Textbooks and East Asian History."⁸⁰ The study identified eight significant historical occurrences or issues and contrasted how those events were reported in various nations. For the purposes of this dissertation, I shall solely discuss Chinese, Japanese, and South Korean

⁷⁴ Duus P., *War Stories*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). op. cit. p. 102

⁷⁵ *ivi* op. cit. p. 101

⁷⁶ Zheng W. (2009). *Old Wounds, New Narratives: Joint History Textbook Writing and Peacebuilding in East Asia*. p. 104

⁷⁷ Chung J., *Colonial Korea and the Asia-Pacific war: A comparative analysis of textbooks in South Korea and Japan*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). p. 154

⁷⁸ *ibid.*

⁷⁹ *ivi* p. 157

⁸⁰ Tohmatsu H., *Japanese history textbooks in comparative perspective*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). p.115

textbooks. Additionally, I will concentrate on three historical occurrences that I have chosen to be crucial in the development of collective memory and national identities of the three nations under consideration: the Nanjing massacre, comfort women, and the atomic bomb.

Nanjing Massacre

The Japanese conquered Nanjing on December 13, 1937, after two weeks of fierce fighting between the Japanese and Chinese troops. The Japanese forces slaughtered a large number of Chinese civilians and prisoners of war throughout the conflict. This is a fact that has been accepted and agreed upon by all the nations.⁸¹ The name given to this atrocity is the Nanjing Massacre. However, looking through the textbooks of different nations there are two main points of contention surrounding this episode. The first one is about the victims' numbers and the second one is about the massacre's nature, specifically whether the Japanese soldiers committed the atrocity on purpose or whether it happened by accident.⁸² It is stated in every edition of the Chinese textbook that there were approximately 300,000 victims. Japanese textbooks, on the other hand, vary in how specific they are regarding the number. For instance, the most popular textbook in Japanese schools, produced by Yamakawa, simply refers to "a considerable number" of victims.⁸³ Additionally, the Tokyo Shoseki history book mentions 200,000 casualties. The Nanjing Massacre is completely absent from Yasakawa's *Japanese History B*, which only mentions the Japanese takeover of Nanjing.⁸⁴ Similar to Japanese textbooks, the widely used South Korean book refers to the death of "hundreds of thousands of regular people" rather than providing an exact amount.⁸⁵ As a result, it might be said that other nations tend to place less emphasis on the event than China does. Additionally, there is a definite inclination to downplay the massacre's scope. China portrays the Japanese forces as acting with complete conscience considering the magnitude of the disaster. The Chinese textbook CWH even goes out of its way to connect the slaughter to the Nazi Holocaust by contrasting photographs of the events on the book's pages. The book emphasizes that the victims were only unarmed, innocent bystanders, not war captives.⁸⁶ The Chinese historical account emphasizes two elements in order to convey the seriousness of the incident: first, the significant number of

⁸¹ *ibid.*

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ Li W., *International wars in Chinese secondary school history textbooks, 1931-1951*, in Shin G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). pp. 143-144

⁸⁴ *ivi* p.144

⁸⁵ Tohmatsu H., *Japanese history textbooks in comparative perspective*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). p.116

⁸⁶ *ibid.*

deaths; and second, the innocence of the victims and the deliberate nature of the Japanese troops' massacre. The CWH describes the massacre with gruesome details and condemns it with a solemn language. Moreover, it clearly states that the act was "a well-organized and planned six-weeks long slaughter of the innocent residents".⁸⁷ On the other hand, the Japanese textbooks make no mention of whether the killing was planned or not. Only the fact that the slaughter was directed at unarmed civilians is mentioned in one Korean textbook.⁸⁸ This leads to differing memories and reconstructions of the events, especially for the two engaged countries: China and Japan. According to Tohmatsu, there are various schools of thought among Japanese researchers about the Nanjing Massacre. For instance, The Illusion school denies the existence of such organized crime and asserts that the Chinese government fabricated it and exaggerated it in order to win over the world's sympathies and further its own political objectives. Other institutions, including the Middle Ground School, which Tohmatsu believes to be the most trustworthy, claim that the slaughter did indeed occur, albeit on a much smaller scale.⁸⁹ However, the Chinese government has concluded that 300,000 innocent people were killed in the genocide. Nevertheless, a lot of Western and Japanese historians agree that the number is implausible.⁹⁰ Since the 1990s, the "Nanjing Massacre" has been used as a metaphor for the pain and struggle of the Chinese people by the Chinese government. The event is being recounted to advance politics, such as to foster patriotism and bring the country together. Tohmatsu claims that this is the reason that the incident and the Chinese people's fight against Imperial Japan are covered extensively in Chinese textbooks.⁹¹ The severity of the onslaught is described in Chinese history books as though the Japanese soldiers were savage creatures rather than even remotely human.⁹² The narration of the textbook is written in such a way as to convey and show the brutality and cruelty of the Japanese military by extensively explaining the killing techniques and the ways in which troops tortured and mistreated Chinese citizens. The picture that the books attempt to present is one of a quiet, innocent community ripped to pieces by the brutality of individuals who resemble monsters. The depiction, thus, attempts to dehumanize the adversary and its actions by referring to Japanese soldiers as beasts. Chinese citizens, on the other hand, are individuals who were previously leading quiet existence and now find themselves fighting not only for their own lives but also for peace and the independence of their

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

⁸⁹ *ivi* p.117

⁹⁰ *ivi* p. 118

⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁹² Li W., *International wars in Chinese secondary school history textbooks, 1931-1951*, in Shin G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). p. 143

nation. The phrasing of the textbooks is crucial for creating a narrative and recollection of the event. The way history is presented creates a narration instead of another. The narration that sticks out by depicting Japanese troops as harsh and vicious states that Japan is bad, and China is nice, one is the aggressor, and one is the victim. As Zheng points out political leaders are fiercely opposed to histories that contain the presenting of the opposing point of view because they have a strong interest in preserving narratives that flatter their own group and foster group solidarity by stressing stark differences between themselves and other groups.⁹³ Political considerations may regularly influence how history of other peoples is written since all nation-states and governments give historical textbook writing much weight when determining what to educate future generations about their national histories. Li claims that Chinese textbooks are not intended to incite hatred and hostility but rather to highlight the barbarism of warfare tactics and the inhumane violation of international law.⁹⁴ Chinese texts also highlight the horrors committed at "Unit 731," a site the Japanese built in Northeast China to conduct studies on germs and viruses for germ warfare.⁹⁵ Gruesome experiments were often conducted on alive Chinese civilians and also included human vivisection practices. During the tests, more than 3,000 Chinese people perished.⁹⁶

Forced Labour and Comfort Women

Several non-Japanese individuals living under Japanese authority were enlisted to help Japan's war operations during the Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945) and the Pacific War (1941–1945). Tens of thousands of Asians living under Japanese rule, were forced to work to serve for the Japanese military and industry, frequently in brutal and cruel conditions which often resulted in suffering and death in many cases.⁹⁷ The discussion around the infamous comfort women is inserted in this issue. "Comfort women" is the term used to talk about young girls, both Japanese and foreign, that were taken and used as prostitutes for Japanese soldiers on the front lines. The topic is widely discussed above all in South Korea as a large number of them were Korean. There are still several disagreements around this topic. Chinese texts, both the earlier and the more recent versions, make very little mention of the problem of forced labour, and comfort

⁹³ Zheng W. (2009). *Old Wounds, New Narratives: Joint History Textbook Writing and Peacebuilding in East Asia*. op. cit. p. 104

⁹⁴ Li W., *International wars in Chinese secondary school history textbooks, 1931-1951*, in Shin G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). op. cit.p. 144

⁹⁵ *ivi* op. cit. p. 143

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁹⁷ Tohmatsu H., *Japanese history textbooks in comparative perspective*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). p.125

women even less.⁹⁸ The exploitation of comfort women in China, Korea, and the Philippines is mentioned in the Yamakawa Japanese history textbook, although only in a footnote. Many Korean women were sent to Japanese factories as volunteer corps members and to the front lines as comfort personnel, according to the Tokyo Shoseki textbook. However, the number of people who were brought in to support Japanese war efforts is not specified in any Japanese textbooks.⁹⁹ The textbooks in Korea are the ones that go into the most depth about the horrors and working circumstances associated with forced labour. Furthermore, the manuals in Korea go into details on how numerous Korean women were mobilized and that many of them were recruited not voluntarily to serve as comfort women. Additionally, the Korean Contemporary History includes a footnote that describes the former comfort women who still stage weekly demonstrations in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul.¹⁰⁰ This mention allows the reader to understand how the situation of comfort women is not yet resolved in the present and continues to be a source of conflict.

Atomic bombing

The American military detonated atomic bombs on the two Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and August 9, respectively, in 1945. The bombardment was the decisive moment in the conclusion of the Asia-Pacific War. As a result, hundreds of thousands of people died. In the written narrative of the bombing there are several controversies about the event especially regarding the nature and number of casualties. The Chinese books make no mention of the number of casualties or the nature of the victims, and the bombing is described as an action to force Japanese surrender.¹⁰¹ In a similar vein, only footnotes in Yamakawa, the most frequently circulated textbook in Japanese, make direct reference to it. As opposed to this, the Tokyo Shoseki textbook reports that there were over 200,000 fatalities.¹⁰² Additionally, the effects of the bomb's radiation on the time after its detonation and up until the present are mentioned. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan receives zero mention in the Korean texts.¹⁰³ The fact that no publication makes any distinctions between the victims' backgrounds suggests that they were mostly citizens, not soldiers.¹⁰⁴ This therefore amplifies in the narrative the magnitude of the event. Despite the gravity of the

⁹⁸ *ivi* pp. 125-126

⁹⁹ *ivi* p. 126

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *ivi* pp. 119-120

¹⁰² *ivi* p.119

¹⁰³ *ivi* p.120

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*

situation, the Japanese textbooks give a sober and realistic portrayal of the tragedy of the bomb as opposed to the overly emotional descriptions of the Nanjing Massacre tragedy that can be found in the Chinese books. Tohmatsu contends that the Japanese see the bombing as divine retribution for Japanese militarism.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, in this perspective, the victims are the victims of Japanese militarism. As a result, the incident is seen as a reminder to avoid making the same mistakes again.

Towards a common history

The three countries present different narratives regarding the choice of topics covered, the way they are treated, and especially in the choice of words used. History is narrated in Japan in a manner that is succinct, unbiased, and dispassionate, allowing history to be portrayed as a series of historical occurrences without bias or stance.¹⁰⁶ This method has the effect of preventing pupils from becoming excessively enthusiastic about history. Leaving aside the publications made by the Tsukurukai Society that offer an ultra-nationalist revisionist narrative. Chinese and Korean books, in contrast, present the events in a more political and subjective manner. Tohmatsu contends that this discrepancy results from China and Korea being two cultures that are offspring of the Confucian tradition, which views history as a moral discipline with a teaching purpose.¹⁰⁷ The conflicting historical narratives of the three nations, Japan, Korea, and China, constitute a significant barrier to peace. Nevertheless, international relations between East Asian countries have been shaped by recollections of past battles and historical narratives. Thus, to promote mutual awareness of the problems brought on by war crimes and to begin the healing of the region, history must be written in a way that promotes reconciliation. History education, as Zheng notes, "is no longer a domestic concern in East Asia" but rather has a broader influence on neighbouring nations.¹⁰⁸ The widespread demonstrations against and criticism of Japanese history book in China and South Korea serve as evidence of this. Due to their role as a catalyst for conflict, history textbooks may also hold the key to launching the process of rapprochement and peacebuilding. Over the past 20 years, an effort has been made to create a common history to promote reconciliation between these various historical

¹⁰⁵ *ivi* pp. 121-122

¹⁰⁶ *ivi* p. 131

¹⁰⁷ *ivi* p.132

¹⁰⁸ Zheng W. (2009). *Old Wounds, New Narratives: Joint History Textbook Writing and Peacebuilding in East Asia*. op.cit. p. 101

narratives. As a result, nations in the Northeast Asian region attempted to unite by writing collaborative history textbooks. Between the conclusion of the war and their entrance into the European Union, Germany and Poland and Germany and France jointly wrote history textbooks using a similar strategy in an effort to promote reconciliation.¹⁰⁹ The Japan-ROK Joint History Research Committee was established in October 2001 as the first official endeavour by Japan and South Korea to address history together.¹¹⁰ The first stage of the project, however, failed in May primarily because the two nations could not come to an understanding and agreement on how to define Japan's colonial authority over Korea. The issue of Japan's participation in the modernisation of Korea, a claim that was vehemently contested and denied by South Korea, was another key topic that caused friction.¹¹¹ As a result of Prime Minister Koizumi's trip to the Yasukuni shrine, the joint research was suspended. China and South Korea expressed outrage and disapproval over the incident. The Yasukuni Shrine, which is home to multiple war criminals' graves, is seen in the Northeast region as a reminder of Japan's imperial history. By paying tribute to it, Japan has demonstrated that it is not embarrassed of its troubled past or its colonial control in East Asia. The committee convened once again in 2007. This time, they made the decision to create a team that would review history textbooks. The report was a failure once more because of friction and disagreements. In 2010, it was published the second report that presented some minor results but did not result in a success.¹¹² Likewise, China and Japan started a parallel project in 2006. A group made up of twenty historians from both nations was established with the purpose of analysing significant, contentious historical occurrences including the Nanjing Massacre and Japan's 21 demands of China. However, it is important to point out that the topic of the "comfort women" was left out.¹¹³ The first report, which was released in 2010, revealed several improvements, such as their agreement to place the whole blame for the conflict on the Japanese side and their usage of the word "aggression" to characterize the start of the second Sino-Japanese war. The committee did, however, dispute on the number of victims in the Nanjing Massacre, with the Chinese side enlarging it and the Japanese side decreasing it, suggesting that Japan was trying to downplay the tragedy.¹¹⁴ Even though these initiatives ultimately failed, academics across the entire area made an effort to collaborate on the creation of a shared history textbook. At a conference on history education

¹⁰⁹ *ivi* p.103

¹¹⁰ Shin G. W., *History textbooks, divided memories, and reconciliation*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). p.4

¹¹¹ *ivi* p. 5

¹¹² *ibid.*

¹¹³ *ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *ivi* pp. 5-6

conducted in China in March 2002, scholars from China, Japan, and South Korea came to the consensus that promoting peace between the nations would benefit from a shared historical interpretation of the past. As a result, they established three national writing committees of fifty-three students each, including seventeen from China, thirteen from Japan, and twenty-three from South Korea.¹¹⁵ Since the initiative was wholly nongovernmental in character and started without any sponsors or funding, all individuals took part as independent researchers.¹¹⁶ Years went into the preparation of the book, and according to the participants, there were disagreements along the way. The most contentious topics included comfort women, the number of people killed in the Nanjing Massacre, and Japan's use of poison gas.¹¹⁷ After three years, in 2005, they published the first East Asian common history textbook "*A History That Opens to the Future: The Contemporary and Modern History of Three East Asian Countries*".¹¹⁸ The same version of the book was translated into the three languages and released concurrently in each nation. The textbook's objective was to create a shared understanding of history in order to promote peace and cooperation between China, South Korea, and Japan.¹¹⁹ History textbooks are made to present a national history that favours a single point of view; in contrast, the joint history textbook highlights the multilateral perspective of the three participating countries by stressing the fact that these nations are connected not only by their shared history but also by their close proximity.¹²⁰ The book is divided into six chapters, each of which focuses on the historical political and cultural relations between the three nations.¹²¹ To reduce national preferences and prevent conflicts, the editors used a lot of archived images, statistics, and witness accounts.¹²² The book also exhorts readers to remember and think back on previous errors in order to avoid them in the future. However, according to Zheng, the narration does not focus enough on the local and international issues of each country, which makes the book more of a supplemental read than an exhaustive description of all historical events.¹²³ The collaborative textbook also emphasizes a crucial point when talking about memory and national narrative: every country has a tendency to emphasize one aspect of the

¹¹⁵ Zheng W. (2009). *Old Wounds, New Narratives: Joint History Textbook Writing and Peacebuilding in East Asia*. p.106

¹¹⁶ *ivi* p. 107

¹¹⁷ *ivi* p.112

¹¹⁸ Shin G. W., *History textbooks, divided memories, and reconciliation*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). p.6

¹¹⁹ Zheng W. (2009). *Old Wounds, New Narratives: Joint History Textbook Writing and Peacebuilding in East Asia*. *op. cit.* p. 102

¹²⁰ *ivi op. cit.* p. 107

¹²¹ *ibid.*

¹²² *ivi* p.110

¹²³ *ivi* p. 109

war, and that aspect is what defines and influences a nation's memory. Chinese editors contend that if individuals just had a one-sided perspective of the war, their discussion about the war will definitely turn into unending discussions and disagreements when they communicate with people from the other two countries.¹²⁴ The narration is built on carefully chosen words and historical details, and as a result, it melds memories and official national histories. Conflicts and misunderstandings between nations with a shared past are brought on by divergent narratives and memories. In 2007, a group of academics from Japan and South Korea attempted to take another step towards reconciliation by publishing a complete history of the two nations "*A History of Korea-Japan Relations*".¹²⁵ Despite these efforts, as Shin argues, the road towards the mutual understanding and shared view of the past is still very far.¹²⁶ Duus expresses a similar viewpoint, adding that it is quite impossible to foresee the nations coming to an agreement on a single textbook. He emphasizes that the fundamental barrier is not the facts that are presented but rather the words and stories that are chosen, as words can be challenging to reconcile.¹²⁷ The prospects for the creation of common histories remain constrained as long as national identity remains at the core of textbook writing. The argument over history textbooks, is according to Duus, a symptom of a bigger issue: the continuation of dividing nationalisms in East Asia that use war and colonialism to incite patriotism at the expense of regional peace and collaboration.¹²⁸

Reading history

It is crucial to examine the political ramifications of the textbook debate in each nation and in their international connections. However, it's equally critical to examine how these problems ultimately affect how citizens see and remember their common history. Since schools are where young people's brains are formed, they are also where the foundations for a nation's future may be established. According to a 2005 survey, "school education" was the most influential factor in forming the historical perspectives of 41.9% of Chinese and 31.8% of Koreans.¹²⁹ A 2006 study found that among a group that includes North and South Korea, the United States, India, and Russia, Chinese respondents selected Japan as their least favorite nation. The Nanjing

¹²⁴ *ivi* p. 111

¹²⁵ Shin G. W., *History textbooks, divided memories, and reconciliation*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). Routledge. op. cit. p. 6

¹²⁶ *ibid.*

¹²⁷ Duus P., *War Stories*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). p. 113

¹²⁸ *ibid.*

¹²⁹ Shin G. W., *History textbooks, divided memories, and reconciliation*, in Shin, G.-W., & Sneider, D.C. (Eds.). (2011). *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories* (1st ed.). Routledge. op.cit. p.7

Massacre was cited as the primary historical issue, followed by vague historical concerns, denial of past atrocities, and visits to the Yasukuni shrine. These historical issues were all cited as the grounds for their negative perception of Japan.¹³⁰ This demonstrates how these concerns are fundamental to the relationships between East Asian nations as well as profoundly ingrained in the historical and cultural beliefs of Asian citizens. For the purpose of developing historical perspective and cultural memory, history education is essential. In fact, it has been found that younger East Asians are more likely than older East Asians to harbor nationalistic views.¹³¹ This demonstrates how an excessively nationalistic perspective of history can promote feelings of nationalism and hostility against nearby nations. Furthermore, many Japanese blame Chinese history teaching with China's anti-Japan attitudes. In fact, a study conducted by Japan's Asahi newspaper in April 2005 found that more than 80% of Japanese people thought that the 2005 riots were sparked by China's patriotic educational system.¹³² Nobutaka Machimura, the foreign minister of Japan, reacted angrily to the demonstrations by accusing Beijing of imposing an imbalanced historical viewpoint on its pupils and warned that "Chinese textbooks are extreme in the manner they uniformly express the 'our nation is correct' perspective."¹³³ Furthermore, research that involved interviewing high school and college students also revealed that there was a clear antagonism toward Japan. Students from lower socioeconomic levels or rural locations were more likely to experience it.¹³⁴ Thus, this may demonstrate how the narratives in schoolbooks have an impact and influences in students' perceptions of foreign policy. In fact, when interviewed Chinese students pointed to historical issues between the two countries, such as the Japanese invasion and the crimes committed by Japanese troops first and foremost the Nanjing massacre, as a factor in their hostility toward Japan. One component of the consolidation of Chinese collective memory is the written narrative found in Chinese history texts. A story that places such a strong emphasis on the Japanese government's use of cruelty and brutality solidifies its legacy in the collective Chinese memory. As a matter of fact, the study furthermore demonstrated that the development of students' sentiments about Japan was influenced by school textbooks, classroom learning, and extracurricular activities including visiting national history museums and war monuments.¹³⁵ Despite this, the survey also shown

¹³⁰ *ivi* p. 13

¹³¹ *ivi* p. 14

¹³² <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2005-may-08-fg-history8-story.html> accessed 1 February 2023.

¹³³ Zheng W. (2009). *Old Wounds, New Narratives: Joint History Textbook Writing and Peacebuilding in East Asia*. p. 105

¹³⁴ Orna N. (2018). 'These War Dramas are like Cartoons': Education, Media Consumption, and Chinese Youth Attitudes Towards Japan, *Journal of Contemporary China*. p. 712

¹³⁵ *ivi* p.713

how even a small number of students from urban upper-middle classes were not greatly impacted by the anti-Japanese narrative, but rather complained about how history was presented in school materials in an excessively biased and demeaning manner.¹³⁶

Online historical narration: writing memories online

Social media and the internet have increasingly occupied a significant role in our lives over the last several decades. As a result, they have a significant impact on how people and society, construct their understanding of the world. Modern world is mediated by digital technology, and as a result, our relationship with information has undergone significant shift.¹³⁷ Thus, in the digital era memory has changed its characteristics. As Wang points out the representation and expression of memory has faced critical consequences as a result from the boom in information transmission, the limitless capacity of information storage in cyberspace, and people's shift from passive information consumers to active information providers.¹³⁸ However, there is currently a lack of research study on how social media and the Internet influence memory.¹³⁹ More and more people are starting to rely on the internet to store their memory. While it feels that memory may very well be expanded online endlessly, such memory can also be compromised and damaged.¹⁴⁰ The internet and social media operate in an atmosphere characterized by an excess of information. This information, however, may be the target of propaganda, manipulation, or fake news.¹⁴¹ Societal media platforms therefore disseminate false information, leading to the construction of false memories in both individuals and social communities. As a result, historical narratives found online—which may be modified or false—have an impact on and shape society's collective memory. Additionally, authoritarian societies with significant state control, like China, are more likely to engage in online media manipulation. To further domestic or international objectives, governments may be concentrating or influencing attention on specific selected historical events. Therefore, people are more susceptible to having their vision of the world and their past altered. Consequently, we are seeing the emergence of a distinctive false or manufactured collective memory. Furthermore, as Wang notes, information is shared online and through social media platforms not just through text but also through manipulatable images and videos, making it even more

¹³⁶ *ivi* pp. 713-714

¹³⁷ Wang, Q. (2022). *Memory online: Remembering in the age of the Internet and social media*. p. 369

¹³⁸ *ibid.*

¹³⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *ivi* p.372

difficult for people to tell the difference between fact and fiction.¹⁴² According to recent studies, the way, structure, and substance of information transmission on social media platforms affects how memories later operate in real-world contexts.¹⁴³ Moreover, the internet has grown through time into a space where knowledge and communication flourish, as well as a location where people's identities are built and moulded. There is no doubt that the internet influences culture at large, as well as individual and collective memory. Social media platforms provide a space where everyone can contribute to memory by narrating and exchanging knowledge with others. As a result, people have an impact on one another's memories and produce new, sometimes false, historical narratives. By creating, reading, and sharing historical information on the internet, individuals can play a leading role in the memory discourse. In this way, a common knowledge of the past develops, which has an impact on how people and society perceive the present and the future. Furthermore, a new historical consciousness develops. The way that social life is being influenced by the Internet raises concerns about how this can affect the likelihood of international peace or conflict. The Internet has the potential to foster greater global understanding in general, but it also has the capacity to sow discord. Furthermore, without intervention from the government, the Internet might serve as a platform for the creation and promotion of more complex and varied collective memory narratives. Therefore, the internet has given rise to new textual and visual medias of exteriorization and objectification that are essential to the present state of cultural memory.¹⁴⁴ Online historical revisionism and ultra-nationalist interpretations of history are on the rise, notably in China and Japan, which lead to real-world impacts.

Japan

People may now swiftly and easily obtain information because of a technology that has become part of daily life: the Internet. Due to the Internet, borders between countries are obsolete. Because it enables interaction and virtual meetings between individuals from different cultures and languages, the Internet has the potential to be a uniting factor both within communities and globally. However, hate speech, false information, and extremism may also be found online. The Internet facilitates global connections that transcend geographical boundaries but at the same time can have an effect in promoting and radicalising separations based on ethnicity and

¹⁴² *ibid.*

¹⁴³ *ivi* p. 373

¹⁴⁴ Bartoletti R. (2011). *Memory and Social Media: New Forms of Remembering and Forgetting*. in B.M Pirani, *Learning from Memory: Body, Memory and Technology in a Globalizing World*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing. p. 4

racism. In the last ten years, Japan has seen the emergence of a right-wing internet group dedicated to encouraging nationalist discourses and supporting historical revisionism to disseminate hate and prejudice towards Chinese and Korean people. The online organization known as "Net-rightist," or "Netu-uyo" in Japanese, has grown from anonymous online chat rooms, but eventually it began to leave the online world and begin acting offline by planning assaults against ethnic minorities in Japan, particularly Chinese and Koreans.¹⁴⁵ A rebirth of Japanese Imperialism's colonial ideals is the driving force behind these attacks and discrimination, which is why they target South Korea and China, two of Japan's former colonies. This occurrence also coincides with Shinzo Abe's militaristic policies that were implemented following his re-election at the end of 2012. Modern Japan was founded after World War II on the values of democracy, peace, and anti-militarism. Through its rejection of militarism and adoption of peace and democracy as its guiding principles, modern Japan has come to represent the role of the defeated, as victim of the war, rather than perpetrator. This trajectory of ideals was altered by Abe's reversion to a militaristic outlook, which worried Japan's neighbouring countries, once victims of Japanese colonialism. Moreover, these measures supported and legitimized extreme right-wing ideologies like those advocated by "Net-rightists." Midori notes that even if this group's viewpoint did not reflect that of the majority or the mainstream of Japanese citizens, there were no explicit protests or other signs of the populace's discontent.¹⁴⁶ Because social media platforms have the ability to amplify and enhance the impacts by reaching a broader audience, the propagation of hate speech and historical revisionism online is a concerning issue. Additionally, the internet dissemination of nationalist historical interpretations can support and encourage the propagation of racist and neo-fascist ideology.¹⁴⁷ Since memory is what gives a community its sense of identity, how memory is rebuilt in different ways constantly alters each person's concept of themselves, their place in the world, and even their ability to make political decisions.¹⁴⁸ The collective memory of the community is continuously altered by assigning new interpretations to past events. The propagation of erroneous historical narratives and, thus, inaccurate communal memories of the past are encouraged by Japan's historical revisionism of its Imperial era, which in turn impacts and forms the country's contemporary identity. To maintain the image of a Japan that was a victim of the war and was committed to peace, post-war Japan was constructed in such a way

¹⁴⁵ Midori O. (2019). *The Daily Us (vs. Them) from Online to Offline: Japan's Media Manipulation and Cultural Transcoding of Collective Memories*, Journal of Contemporary Eastern Asia, Vol. 18, No.2, p. 50

¹⁴⁶ *ivi* p. 51

¹⁴⁷ *ivi* p. 52

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*

that memories of atrocities committed during the Japanese Imperial period were to be suppressed and destroyed. However, Japan came under scrutiny in the 1990s as subsequent Korean and Chinese victims began to share their accounts of the violence and discrimination they had experienced at the hands of the Japanese military. The Nanjing Massacre and sexual slavery were, by far, the two main topics that dominated the victims' testimonies. As a consequence, Japan was obliged to finally admit its involvement and responsibility in the incident and apologize to comfort Women in 1993. However, the problem is still not seen as having been properly raised, rectified, or acknowledged, much alone with adequate compensation for the victim. Midori suggests that one of the causes for the rise of the right-wing organization "Netu-uyo" might be linked to Japan's adoption of views such as pacifism and the admission of its complicity of war crimes.¹⁴⁹ Therefore, this conservative group began to emerge in an effort to resurrect Japan's imperial past and beliefs, which were founded on the discrimination of other Asian nations. Chinese and Korean individuals were the primary targets of the derogatory remarks made online by Net-rightists. Furthermore, in order to bolster their positions, they engaged in historical revisionism by claiming that the war victims' testimonies were manufactured. For instance, some asserted that the comfort women were liars or that the Nanjing Massacre never happened. As a result, a new historical narrative is produced and the collective memory of the group is influenced, which in turn affects the group's sense of identity and outlook on the outside world. Internet, by its very nature, has a propensity to widen the audience that may be reached; as a result, the group's racist and nationalistic ideals began to emerge from the online world and have an impact on the physical world as well. As a result of Japan's colonial past, Chinese and Korean minorities who were born and now reside in Japan were also targets of the online right-wing. During the FIFA World Cup in Korea and Japan in 2002, the number of negative internet remarks increased. Koreans residing in Japan were the focus of the Netu-uyo, who urged them to return to Korea and abandon Japan.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, some of the internet users established actual groups with the aim of promoting racist views towards Korean minority in Japan. One of them was the Zaitokukai, "the Civil Group that does not permit the privilege of Koreans in Japan." As a result, the group began to meet in person and push for the elimination of social welfare policies for Koreans.¹⁵¹ Through websites and YouTube videos, the group was able to sign up 11,000 new members over the course of 4

¹⁴⁹ *ivi* p.58

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*

years.¹⁵² Strong hatreds held by the group against neighbouring nations and left-leaning ideologies emerged as a result of the ultra-right political climate created by the second Shinzo Abe Administration in 2012. Abe was viewed as being quite divisive when it came to South Korea's and China's diplomatic relations. Abe, who is the grandson of the former minister of commerce and industry Nobusuke Kishi, a war criminal, did not conceal his support for the necessity of a return to militarism and nuclear weapons and for Japan's position in the war as one driven by self-defence. Abe's position on the comfort women matter was also not very encouraging, since he claimed that women were not truly forced to work for the Japanese army.¹⁵³ The goal of Abe's second term was to undermine pacifist Japan and resurrect militarism. In this nationalist atmosphere, the Netu-uyo group flourished. During this time, the government and the internet community supported and fed one another. For instance, Abe authorized the use of the internet for election campaigns after noticing the online support, also in an effort to draw in even more youthful followers. Furthermore, Abe in 2013 paid homage to the Yasukuni Shrine, a place that commemorates war criminals. Nonetheless, the administration's ultimate goal was to nullify Article 9 of the Constitution where it is stated that Japan renounces war. A process was underway to change post-war Japan by destroying demilitarized Japan and to put in action ultra-right ideologies, in order to do this, it was necessary to erase the memory of the past, specifically of Japan's colonial crimes. In consequence of this, comfort women were completely absent from history textbooks by 2012.¹⁵⁴ It was intended to create a new memory of the past by eliminating some of history and creating a new historical narrative. Furthermore, by creating it online, it was made much easier for younger people to access. The goal of this approach was to create a fresh, updated collective memory that was designed by the right-wing supporters. In this way, a new identity for the group was also created as a result. Midori raises a crucial point when she claims that the Net-rightists' hateful rhetoric towards Chinese and Koreans lack any historical context or knowledge.¹⁵⁵ They usually just think on the present and fail to understand why these ethnic minorities were born in Japan. In their ideology, they tend to ignore the part Japan played in the war and instead blame the Korean and Chinese people for their actions, such as by asserting that the comfort women volunteered to serve in the Japanese military or that Korean and Chinese immigrants came to Japan of their own free will. In the end, blame is always assigned

¹⁵² *ivi* p. 59

¹⁵³ *ivi* p. 60

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *ivi* p.63

to the Other and never examined the context thoroughly, rather, the truth is chosen to be disregarded and transformed. Despite the growth of the right wing in Japan, it can hardly be said that these groups accurately reflect the opinions of the vast majority of Japanese people both on history and their country's diplomatic relations with Japan's former colonies.

China

In recent years, China like Japan has also seen an increase in nationalist and hate speech online. Again, like Japan, these discriminatory discourses have also turned out to have consequences in the real world, influencing Chinese citizens' perceptions of Sino-Japanese relations. Because of the tumultuous shared history between China and Japan during the Second World War, nationalist discourses and anti-Japanese feelings have been expressed on Chinese blogs and social media over the years. The rise of nationalistic discourses places a strong emphasis on memories of the war and the past, including conflicting emotions about China's glorious past and the humiliations it has experienced at the hands of foreign powers in more recent history. Moreover, some diplomatic tensions and territorial disputes with nearby nations like Japan rekindled nationalism among Chinese people.¹⁵⁶ Due to the Chinese Communist Party's policies centred on patriotic propaganda, nationalist speech is already omnipresent throughout Chinese society, from schools to the press. The rise of popular nationalism in China throughout the 1990s coincided with the advent of the internet, which created the ideal setting for nationalist debates, activity, and ultimately petitions and demonstrations. Japan-related diplomatic issues have frequently served as fodder for nationalist retaliation and anti-Japanese sentiments. The complicated relationship between China and the Japanese nation, which was fuelled in part by the still-fresh memories of the war and the atrocities perpetrated by Japan, was the primary source of the most intense and broad nationalist sentiments that generated enormous popular mobilization. The territorial disputes over the Diaoyu Islands and Japan's desire to get a permanent membership on the U.N. Security Council are two other significant events that have sparked a wave of demonstrations.¹⁵⁷ These occurrences intensified and ultimately culminated in a wave of online outrage that sparked off-line demonstrations in various Chinese cities and a boycott of Japanese goods. An online petition against Japan's UNSC membership garnered tens of million signatures in 2005, demonstrating the exponential growth in the number of

¹⁵⁶Ki D. H., Kim J. & Sun S. (2014). *News use, nationalism, and Internet use motivations as predictors of anti-Japanese political actions in China*, Asian Journal of Communication. p. 590-591

¹⁵⁷ivi p. 591

people who were adamantly opposed to it.¹⁵⁸ The conflict over ownership of the Diaoyu Islands has come up often over the years, but it reemerged in 2012 after the Japanese government attempted to acquire them.¹⁵⁹ Despite being under Japanese rule since the Chinese were defeated in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, the Chinese people still see these islands in the East China Sea as Chinese territory. Chinese nationalists retaliated by urging rallies and a boycott of Japanese goods on internet discussion communities. The violent street protests, which included destroying Japanese flags and looting Japanese products, were finally put an end to by Chinese police.¹⁶⁰ As we've already seen, the Internet can serve as a haven for inaccurate information, hateful speech, and calls for protest. On the other hand, the Internet has the ability to promote the development of narratives of shared collective memory; this may be advantageous in promoting the reconciliation of nations with a difficult shared history, such as, for instance, China and Japan or Japan and Korea

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*

CHAPTER 3

IMAGES

Memory in Images

Images are the "visual representation of something" which can be two-dimensional or three-dimensional.¹ In the category of images we can find movies, pictures, drawings, tv series etc... Images thus have the potential of portraying something and deliver information and emotions to the viewer. Images can also have a significant impact on how the past is portrayed and hence affect how it is remembered by individuals and communities. Analyzing different images of the past can offers us a way to examine how different groups portray their past visually. Furthermore, it offers the opportunity to compare how memory is formed in different nations thanks to different visual representations of the past. The only thing we need to do is examine previous works of art, snapshots from the past, or films from the past that allow us to catch a glimpse of a remote past or to help us recall distant events. Thus, images come to our aid to help us remember and to consolidate memory by allowing us to experience or relive history. The German art historian Aby Warburg, who also developed the phrase "social memory," appears to have been the first to conceive about the potential and capacity of images as carriers of memory.² Warburg's research developed around a theory of images as mediators of memory. He argued that the survival of the past was not guaranteed by texts but rather by images. Writing was once thought to be the best memory intermediary since it rendered memories everlasting and eternal in contrast to visuals, which were considered to be transient because they were expected to deteriorate with time.³ Writing lends itself to being a direct reproduction of human mind, but pictures, in contrast to writing, appear dedicated to being the instant portrayal of emotions. Images convey ideas without speaking; some are ambiguous and opaque, while

¹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/image> accessed 11 January 2023.

² Assmann, J. (2010). *Communicative and Cultural Memory*. in A. Erll & A. Nünning (Ed.), *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. p.110

³ Assmann A. (2015). *Ricordare: forme e mutamenti della memoria culturale*. p. 243

others are expressive and clear. Images can therefore be interpreted in many ways. At first look, a picture might convey information, elicit an emotion, or bring back memories. Some other times, it can also subtly hide its meaning. Furthermore, visuals help us when verbal expression is insufficient to convey a concept or to recall a specific memory, especially if the event is painful and deeply ingrained in our unconscious. For instance, when we try to recollect events from our childhood, we seldom associate them with specific ideas or verbal descriptions; instead, throughout the remembering process, it is frequently the visuals that surface to convey an emotion or an instance. The "picture superiority effect" is a term used in psychology to describe the idea that visuals and pictures are more likely to be recalled than words. Paivio's dual coding hypothesis, which contends that images have an advantage over words because they may be encoded with semantic information via two separate pathways, is one research that has had a significant impact. Paivio asserts that images are both processed by the image and verbal code, while words are processed solely through a verbal pathway. In other words, when analyzing a picture, people not only focus on its visual characteristics but also articulate verbally.⁴ This process ensures that the images we process are more easily remembered and archived. It also means that images have a strong potential to guide our memory both as individuals and as a collective in one direction over another, more so than written words. Pictures permeate every instant of our lives, marking it and impacting how we see the world around us. As time has gone on, images have evolved in look and form, shifting from sketches, paintings, and photography to moving images. The advent of photography and later motion pictures revolutionized the way memory and images related, these tools made it possible to make historical moments eternal and always within reach to relive memory. The Northeastern region represents an example of nations with an obsessive relationship with their memory and history; and this consequently permeates and is reflected in so many ways in society and everyday life. Analyzing the visual works created in these nations, which are impacted by traumatic experiences of the past, reveals this. The past, which is defined by historical injustices and tragedy, is depicted in today's modern society through new visual representations such as photography, films, cartoons, TV shows, and comic books, bringing the memory into the present. These historical injustices often refer to wrongdoings carried out by the Japanese government during its colonial rule and military expansion.⁵ A past characterized by violence

⁴ Whitehouse, A.J.O., Maybery, M.T. and Durkin, K. (2006). *The development of the picture-superiority effect*. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 24: p. 767

⁵ Hong K., Rhee J. (2022). *Witnessing and Remembering Trauma in Northeast Asia in the Visual Age*, *Asian Studies Review*. p. 1

and suffering causes an impact in people's lives; consequently, this impact also translates into the artistic and cultural vision of a nation. Thus, the artistic works and medias reflect an interpretation and vision of the memory of the past, which is strongly linked to the nation's popular culture and its politics. In this "visual era," where numerous pictures are created by both conventional and new media every second, some images almost instantaneously fade from viewers' memory while others make enduring imprints. Images used to depict historical events are implicitly filtered by the teller's own viewpoint. No matter if it's a picture or a documentary, visual representation requires some level of human emotion, so it's impossible for it to convey events in an objective or logical way. Furthermore, visuals can alter the viewers' perceptions, causing them to recall a memory or learn new information. Even so, when the media is state-controlled and images are employed to promote political agendas and fortify a sense of national identity, they are more vulnerable to manipulation for political purposes. Some images and symbols are charged with a political valence and emotional charge capable of reviving the memory of a traumatic past. For instance, in East Asia, the image of the Rising Sun conjures up bitter memories of mistreatment and violence on the part of the Japanese troops during the war. The Imperial Japanese Army employed the Rising Sun design throughout World War 2. Even now, because it summons to mind a painful past when Japan was a colonial empire, the single image sparks controversy and outrage from the countries that were ruled by Japan at the time. For instance, in 2022 Netflix faced criticism for airing two episodes of the American TV program "Umbrella Academy," which included the Rising Sun symbol.⁶ The incident drew criticism from the Korean organization VANK, Voluntary Agency Network of Korea, which is devoted to online promotion of Korean history and culture. In response, VANK attacked Netflix for being unaware that the image of the Rising Sun is the banner of Japan's war forces and the emblem of fascism in East Asia. A similar incident had occurred in 2021 with the Japanese anime "Demon Slayer" criticized in Korea for the protagonist's earrings that resembled the symbol of the Rising Sun. To avoid controversy, Netflix edited out scenes to leave out the Rising Sun design in both the movie and the television series in South Korea.⁷ These examples help to highlight how powerfully images may stir up memories, and occasionally protests for what those images stand for in a country's cultural memory. Memory is passed down from generation to generation because of individuals being able to observe the past through mediated representations. People who haven't personally experienced traumatic events might nonetheless

⁶ https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/art/2022/07/688_332535.html accessed 15 August 2022.

⁷ <https://thediplomat.com/2021/05/despite-political-tensions-japans-demon-slayer-tops-south-korean-book-market-and-box-office/> accessed 12 January 2023.

observe them through the use of visual representations. The foundation of the collective and cultural memory of historical and social tragedies is this form of mediated witnessing.⁸

China

Television and movies have a big role in creating a distinct imaginative space of Japanese as the Other, since they are the main sources of information for most Chinese about the Japanese people and their culture.⁹ In Chinese media, the subject of conflict and resurgence against the Japanese is widespread. The collective memory of the War of Resistance against Japan is crucial to Chinese political and national identity. The Second Sino-Japanese War is a common setting for Chinese films and television programs, and a recurrent thread is that the Chinese are the good people, and the Japanese are the evil men who need to be punished and eradicated. Since decades, China has produced blatantly nationalistic war films and television programs that are well-received by viewers. The popularity of these media is sometimes linked to more fundamental sociopolitical aspects, such as Chinese nationalism, China's long-standing hostility against Japan, and the difficulty of Chinese governmental censorship.¹⁰ State-owned media companies, independent media outlets, and media content are all heavily regulated by the government in China's authoritarian environment. Chinese film and TV production has always been under the control and censorship of the state; from Mao to the present day, the media have been to some degree supervised and approved by the CCP. Film and television were only used for Party propaganda during Mao's leadership. Nowadays the production of film and TV series is more independent in some respects but is equally scrutinized and subject to state approval before being distributed.¹¹ As a result, the marketized creation of memory in China is very different from that in democratic and capitalist Western cultures since it takes place inside an authoritarian state capitalism framework. Therefore, it is challenging to transmit alternate, distinct recollections in opposition to the official memory. These wartime tales might be seen as a propaganda weapon used by the government to foster a sense of patriotism in its viewers. The government's strategy of blaming international diplomatic disputes to divert public

⁸ Hong K., Rhee J. (2022). *Witnessing and Remembering Trauma in Northeast Asia in the Visual Age*, Asian Studies Review. p. 4

⁹ Song G. (2017). *Consuming the Anti-Japanese War On The Tv Screen In China: State Ideology, Market And Audience*, Journal of Oriental Studies, Vol. 49, No. 2 (March 2017), p.8

¹⁰ <https://www.vice.com/en/article/4ag9ep/weird-chinese-world-war-ii-dramas-tv-show-trends> accessed 29 July 2022.

¹¹ Steinfeld J. (2015). *Screened shots: The Chinese film industry's obsession with portraying Japan's invasion during World War II*, Volume 44, Issue 1 p. 104

attention from internal politics may be another factor in pushing the development of wartime-themed plays and films. Stories about the Sino-Japanese War or Chinese communist history will thus probably be accepted by the Chinese government, as opposed to plays that are set in the present since the difficulties the protagonists undergo in the plot may imply weak CCP rule. One only needs to consider that the film and television industries specifically received orders from the government to increase the number of nationalist and patriotic-oriented productions in 2015, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, to fully grasp how deeply ingrained military patriotic media are in Chinese culture.¹² Encouraging nationalist and anti-Japanese sentiments is in the interests of the Chinese Communist Party since promoting these values encourages national unity and provides a distraction for the masses from domestic political scandals. Since the 1990s, there has been a significant push toward the development of anti-Japanese media that served as a distraction from domestic politics. This is because after the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989, the Communist Party found itself at the heart of a crisis of political legitimacy. In the perspective of the populace, identifying a foreign adversary provided political legitimacy for the government. Likewise, the Communist Party was involved in several internal corruption scandals in 2015. Because of this, it may be that the two events—internal political problems and the anniversary of the end of the war—were the two elements influencing the rise in patriotic movies and TV shows. An estimated 70 percent of the Chinese media market is devoted to the anti-Japanese war genre.¹³ However, as Steinfeld observes, the memory of the Chinese people as a whole, particularly that of the elderly and those who saw it firsthand, is still quite strong.¹⁴ As a result, it is impossible to totally rule out the phenomenon of anti-Japanese films and TV series as just a byproduct of nationalist propaganda favored by the government. They serve as a reflection of a nation that is still deeply troubled by its traumatic history and is still working to accept and recover from it. As a result, visual representation is crucial for promoting historical discourse, letting people experience the events, safeguarding memory, and ensuring that future generations are aware of the past.

¹² *ivi* p. 103

¹³ *ivi op.cit.* p. 104

¹⁴ *ivi* p. 105

Sino-Japanese War in Chinese media

China is the largest and one of the most lucrative markets for TV drama production. On Chinese TV, which has more than three hundred stations, Chinese dramas are the most popular genre.¹⁵ Because they can be viewed on TV and online, dramas are one of the most popular forms of media in Chinese society and appeal to a diverse audience. Therefore, they have a cultural impact on how people see and identify as Chinese. Additionally, they have an impact on the collective memory of the nation, particularly when it comes to dramas that deal with recent Chinese history. Chinese dramas about the War of Resistance against Japan have been extremely successful since 2005.¹⁶ Over time, they have thus established themselves as central tools for disseminating and consolidating Chinese collective memory. Moreover, the fact that they are televised makes them the media par excellence for reaching the masses and thus having a real impact in popular perception. Although television drama production is mostly funded by private investment, it is nevertheless necessary to operate within the party-state framework. Nonetheless, the government is the owner of all television networks. Furthermore, the state has always recognized television as a crucial weapon for propaganda and public instruction. The State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television, (SARFT) which is directly under the administration of the Chinese Communist Party's Propaganda Department, oversees approving and censoring TV programs. Therefore, propaganda is a primary goal for state-owned media to achieve, thus the state frequently uses authoritarian authority to govern media products. As a result, historical media products must adhere to political demands imposed by the state. Every TV drama produced in China is subject to government review and approval. The process is typically completed in a few months and is conducted at the provincial level. Dramas with delicate subjects, such as those with historical settings of notable events, must, nevertheless, acquire clearance from the central government and must wait a longer period of time for inspection. This occurs because the topics presented are sometimes even politically contentious for Chinese foreign policy and diplomatic ties as well as internal concerns.¹⁷ According to Article 11 of the "Rules for the Administration of the Content of Television Dramas", the most sensitive topics to be included in television media are content related to "politics, military affairs, diplomatic affairs, national security, cooperation with non-

¹⁵ Song G. (2017). *Consuming the Anti-Japanese War On The Tv Screen In China: State Ideology, Market And Audience*. p.3

¹⁶ Wang Y., Chew M. M., (2021). *State, market, and the manufacturing of war memory: China's television dramas on the War of Resistance against Japan*, *Memory Studies*, Volume 14 Issue 4 p. 878

¹⁷ Song G. (2017). *Consuming the Anti-Japanese War On The Tv Screen In China: State Ideology, Market And Audience*. p.4

party members, ethnicity, religion, the judiciary and public security.”¹⁸ Therefore, the state intervenes to control what information may be made available to the general public, resulting in the mediation and manipulation of the media's visual portrayal. Undoubtedly, this affects how the public perceives the situation. In 2005, seventeen dramas set during the Sino-Japanese war were broadcasted. Between 2001 and 2004, the yearly average broadcast rate was 3.3 percent, but it gradually rose to 29 in 2009 and then to 38 in 2012.¹⁹ These statistics therefore demonstrate the extent to which the percentage of viewers who actively interacted with media that dealt with the war and anti-Japanese sentiment has increased over time, as more and more people have been exposed to it. The reasons for the success of dramas set during the Sino-Japanese War are several. The State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television of China imposed a variety of directives, which was one of the contributing elements. They imposed limitations on the types of dramas that might air between 2004 and 2011. Crime-related dramas, period pieces, time-travel dramas, and adaptations of dramas from other nations were consequently outlawed. Politics and morality both played a role in the introduction of these regulations.²⁰ These actions may have contributed to the rise in the creation and consumption of war-themed dramas. Furthermore, the government began to encourage and support the creation of TV dramas centred on important periods in Chinese history, such as the Communist Revolution. This kind of dramas are designed to "contain historical narratives that promote the official memory and mainstream values such as patriotism."²¹ As a result, through manipulation of popular visual representation, the government plays a critical and key role in shaping Chinese society's collective memory. The Chinese government believes that war dramas are crucial for the Chinese people and supports the viewing of these dramas by ensuring that they are televised during prime time.²² Dramas devoted to China's 20th century history are also used as a means of celebrating historical commemorations and anniversaries. As these occasions approach, production is greatly increased under encouragement from the state, which perceives dramas as a tribute to Chinese history and a tool to encourage remembrance of specific historical events such as anniversaries of the Victory of the Resistance War.²³ In China, government officials typically plan and direct commemorations of historical events that are significant to the history of modern China, particularly the foundation of the Chinese Communist Party. There is no

¹⁸ *ivi* p. 5

¹⁹ Wang Y., Chew M. M., (2021). *State, market, and the manufacturing of war memory: China's television dramas on the War of Resistance against Japan*. p. 881

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ *ivi* p. 882

²² *ibid.*

²³ *ibid.*

opportunity for other interpretations because the state promotes the official history and the collective memory of China. The commemoration of these historical occurrences permeates every element of Chinese society in a way that strengthens and reminds people of their identity. In order to engage the entire public in these acts of collective remembrance, official control over broadcast entertainment is therefore crucial. The population becomes more cohesive as a result, and collective memory is strengthened. The success of wartime production may have been influenced by diplomatic tensions with Japan as well. These conflicts may have altered Chinese viewers' perceptions of Japan and drawn them to anti-Japanese content. Although, the intent of these dramas is to promote nationalism and imprint Chinese history in the collective memory, the historical portrayal is not always truthful and true to the facts. Being profitable products, in addition to political agendas, commercial interests also dominate. As a result, the historical account of events is frequently sensationalized with creative devices connected to the narrative or the casting of the actors in order to draw in viewers. Because of this creative process, historical accuracy is often lost. Drama producers add fresh narrative components to the War of Resistance plot in order to make these products more appealing to a variety of viewers. These modifications, however, cannot remove the ideological component of propagating patriotism since dramas still need to have a political propaganda function. Commercial motivations have an impact on the creative decisions that are made in Chinese resistance war related works, while political interests have an impact on their political ideology. In addition, Wang and Klein noticed that the political ideologies promoted varied in accordance with shifts in Party ideology and interests at the time of production, when they examined works developed from 1990 to 2015.²⁴ Consequently, it can be argued that television may still serve as a propaganda weapon and serve as a mirror of the political ideas of the party at each stage. The historical background is used to construct storylines that feature passionate love affairs, thrilling battles, and extraordinary effects. Furthermore, leading young actors or idols are frequently employed in order to garner media attention and audience. According to statistics, middle-aged women make up the majority of the target audience for TV dramas, therefore casting youthful idols may be a strategy to draw in younger viewers. The majority of wartime dramas appear being overly dramatized, captivating tales set during the War of Resistance. The concept of the Sino-Japanese War is used to communicate political principles to the audience. To appeal to a larger audience and foster collective memory and patriotism, the creative story components are utilised. As a result, patriotic ideals and numerous story components are

²⁴ Wang Y., Klein T. (2021). *Representing the victorious past: Chinese revolutionary TV drama between propaganda and marketization*. Media, Culture & Society, Vol. 44. pp. 13-14

combined in wartime dramas. In the end, the historical veracity of the events of the Sino-Japanese War is lost in favour of entertainment. The Japanese militarism, Japanese invasion, "Chinese traitors" (hanjian), corrupted Nationalist Party members, and the courageous resistance of the Chinese people are the story components that continue to be present and accurate in dramas about the War of Resistance.²⁵ These components are essential for emphasizing Chinese bravery and principles, which serve as the story's good guys, while also communicating the nationalist message of resistance against the story's antagonist, Japan. Although, these dramas are often exaggerated and sometimes ridiculous due to sensationalist elements added to the story, they continue to perpetuate a strong anti-Japanese sentiment in the Chinese collective memory and perception. Some narrative aspects in anti-Japanese dramas can be exaggeratedly ludicrous, such as the portrayal of exaggeratedly ignorant and inept Japanese officers or unrealistic excessive violence scenes. The drama *Anti-Japanese Knights-errant*, in which a Japanese soldier is torn apart with his bare hands in one sequence, is one of the most well-known examples that has drawn attention and disapproval from both the international and domestic press.²⁶ Viewers and journalists have frequently criticized this juxtaposition of bizarre and laughable aspects with a period in Chinese history that is considered to be meaningful. Therefore, dramas are accused by critics of mocking history and altering it with these irrational components. These complaints therefore led to calls for tighter state regulation on the creation of historical plays in order to preserve historical accuracy. Even though, wartime dramas are broadcasted at a time meant for family watching, despite criticism, the dramas have rarely been condemned for being too violent or gruesome. Song contends that nationalistic principles justify the depiction's violence while also sending the message that death and violence are justified when they affect Japanese people.²⁷ Song contends that these aspects add a sarcastic and parodic flavour to certain dramas about the fight against Japan in addition to being used just for entertainment.²⁸ They convey a nationalistic and patriotic message on the one hand, but the ludicrous elements put into the plot nearly make fun of it by turning into a caricature. This happens because filmmakers from Hong Kong and Taiwan are mostly responsible for the dramas that receive negative reviews. However, state regulations were introduced in 2015 to

²⁵ Wang Y, Chew M. M., (2021). *State, market, and the manufacturing of war memory: China's television dramas on the War of Resistance against Japan*. p. 884

²⁶ Song G. (2017). *Consuming the Anti-Japanese War On The Tv Screen In China: State Ideology, Market And Audience*. p.7

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ *ivi* p. 8

prohibit the tendency to over-sensationalize the story.²⁹ As a result, the production of wartime dramas diminished over time but remains one of the most popular genres in Chinese television. Thus, it is important to note how prominent memory discourses are present in Chinese visual works showing hence the predominance of memory in the popular discourse and society. Furthermore, it is impossible to discuss memory in China without considering the crucial role the CCP plays: the government plays a powerful role to regulate the process of memory-making. As Song notes, because the anti-Japanese War is so important to the Chinese people's sense of national identity, it is considered to be a safe historical time to discuss.³⁰ Recalling the Sino-Japanese War as a whole helps to create the Other, or the opponent who is Japanese rather than Chinese, and therefore unites the Chinese people.³¹ Being Chinese is thus defined as the negation of being Japanese.

Japanese as the Other in Chinese media

The “Other” is a concept used to define a “member of a dominated out-group, whose identity is considered lacking and who may be subject to discrimination by the in-group.”³² The Other is opposed to the “Us” or the “Self.” By extension, the concept of Otherness is also developed, which is the outcome of a process in which the dominant group, “Us,” constructs one or more subordinate groups, “the Other,” stigmatizing the distinction between the two groups as a denial of identity and providing a justification for potential discrimination. By introducing the idea of otherness, two hierarchical groupings of people are defined.³³ There is an imbalance of power between the two groups since only the dominant group can impose the worth of its identity while simultaneously devaluing the characteristics of the subordinate group. Japanese people are portrayed as the inferior group, the other, in Chinese media accounts of the Sino-Japanese War. Therefore, it is portrayed as having negative characteristics, making them appear to the public as a lower class that should be despised and feared. The Jintan moustache, which is frequently connected aesthetically with Japanese, as well as the clothing, which are distinct from those worn by Chinese characters, help the audience identify the Japanese characters on the screen. Furthermore, drama productions in portraying the linguistic difference between the two groups have used a variety of visual representation techniques in recent years. Sometimes,

²⁹ Wang Y., Chew M. M., (2021). *State, market, and the manufacturing of war memory: China's television dramas on the War of Resistance against Japan*. p. 886

³⁰ Song G. (2017). *Consuming the Anti-Japanese War On The Tv Screen In China: State Ideology, Market And Audience*. op. cit. p.5

³¹ *ivi* p.6

³² Staszak J. (2008). *Other/Otherness*, International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography, Elsevier. p.1

³³ *ivi* p.2

Japanese actors are used to play the Japanese soldiers to illustrate onscreen the differences between the two languages, Chinese and Japanese, and thereby the clear distinction between the two groups audibly as well. Other times, Chinese actors are used to mimic the Japanese language, resulting in the creation of a hybrid language that combines Chinese and Japanese. The latter strategy also shows a desire to emphasize the dominant group's language and cultural superiority over the underdog group.³⁴ Japanese people are portrayed as beings of the devil and the lowest form of humanity since they are all morally associated with negative traits. Derogatory nominatives such as “devil” and “bastards” are also used to refer to them. The terminology used illustrates how the Japanese are perceived as inhuman in the collective Chinese imagination to the extent where when a Chinese character kills a Japanese soldier, he feels neither sorrow or shame since the Japanese are not on the level of being recognized as humans but rather as devils.³⁵ According to Song, preconceptions about Japanese troops being cold-blooded, harsh toward their subordinates, and treating women like slaves are the major foundation for how the Japanese are pictured in China's collective memory and imagination.³⁶ The portrayal of the Japanese as cultural robbers of China is another aspect of their characterisation. As a result, several dramas place a strong emphasis on the fact that Japanese culture is a by-product of Chinese culture, and that the Japanese plagiarize and steal Chinese culture. In conjunction with the rise of Chinese cultural nationalism in recent years, which stresses the supremacy of Chinese culture, this tendency is on the rise.³⁷

Consuming Anti-Japanese media in China

China has experienced a rise in nationalist feeling over the past three decades, which has been followed by anti-Japanese demonstrations in public and boycotts of imported goods. The Chinese Communist Party's campaign to promote "patriotic education" in schools and the media since the 1990s has had a significant role in this trend.³⁸ By bringing everyone together around shared ideals of patriotism and harmony, the Party seeks to promote unity throughout the country. Thus, the primary goal is to promote love for the nation and its history and culture. The nationalist promulgation effort, however, also aims to strengthen the Party's political legitimacy following the Tiananmen Square event in 1989. As a result, the government has

³⁴ Song G. (2017). *Consuming the Anti-Japanese War On The Tv Screen In China: State Ideology, Market And Audience*. p.9

³⁵ *ivi* pp.9-10

³⁶ *ivi* p.10

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ Orna N. (2018). 'These War Dramas are like Cartoons': Education, Media Consumption, and Chinese Youth Attitudes Towards Japan. p. 705

been running this campaign since the 1990s to gain over the public.³⁹ In an effort to promote national unity, the Party also emphasized the importance of collective memory, particularly the memory of the abuse China suffered at the hands of foreign forces. Memory is thus pervasive in its reminding China of its identity and sovereignty against external intrusions both political and cultural.⁴⁰ As a result, people use the term "Century of Humiliation" to refer to the time between 1839 and 1949 when China experienced what is considered as national humiliation and disgrace as a result of Western and Japanese invasions. Japan in this regard is pointed to as the main proponent of the degradation suffered by the Chinese state. For this reason, the Second Sino-Japanese War represents a symbolic event in which China from being a victim is able to prevail in its resistance struggle, against Japan and come out as the victor.⁴¹ Although there were good economic ties between China and Japan in the 1970s, and as a result, historical disagreements were set aside, since the early 2000s, as a result of a number of diplomatic incidents, China has adopted a more patriotic stance, characterized by hostility toward the neighbouring country Japan. This has led to the re-emergence of previous debates over the history of the two nations, particularly the Sino-Japanese War era. Since the 1990s, China's collective memory has been nurtured and consolidated by various multimedia and visual forms of anti-Japanese nationalism. So, for instance, vivid novels depicting the horrors committed by Japanese soldiers were produced, as well as war-themed TV shows, films, and video games where players could murder Japanese soldiers.⁴² As a result, China's society is characterized by a widespread and repeating theme of hatred for Japan. A definite narrative of suffering and cruelty at the hands of the Japanese is told in the pictorial depictions that are in circulating, but they also show a story of people struggling and finally triumphing. Memory can occasionally be influenced by political objectives of the government. For example, the fact that the Chinese government controls all media, including television, and makes use of them for propagandist purposes, is proof of this. Chinese anti-Japanese dramas are a complex product born out of various needs, both political and economic. The historical portrayal of these media is not always truthful nor in the foreground, thus making them not appropriate for spreading memory and teaching history. Despite this, the perpetual depiction of hatred toward the Japanese is undoubtedly a reflection of the collective memory of the Japanese war and invasion. A crucial moment in the formation of Chinese identity is the resistance and struggle with the Japanese,

³⁹ *ivi* p.706

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² *ivi* p. 707

which is reinforced by persistent reconstruction of collective and cultural memory. The popularity of these media, which are broadcast on television and thus more widely available, has an impact on how the Chinese people perceive and remember certain events. According to a study published in 2018, nearly half of high school students surveyed said that watching media, both movies and TV content, with a war theme contributed to hostility and negative impression of Japan.⁴³ In light of this information, it is undeniable that exposure to anti-Japanese media has an impact on people's perceptions of the past and memories, even when they are young. Despite this, this does not mean that it is applicable to everyone; in fact, the study also shows that one-third of the students surveyed look at these media with a critical and sceptical eye, complaining about the unrealistic portrayals of history and to the heavily hateful ideology against Japan.⁴⁴ New generations of students are being exposed to more and more inputs from many cultures, which has a positive impact on their worldview by expanding it to include more people and cultures. Indeed, as a result of this, even students who consider themselves to be fiercely patriotic nonetheless manage to consume and love Japanese entertainment, particularly anime and manga. This allowed them to continue consuming Japanese cultural items while maintaining their Chinese identity and nationalist beliefs. One may suppose that in the future, despite the government-sponsored drive to instil nationalistic values, an increasing number of young people will be able to develop a more favourable opinion of Japan's neighbour through the consumption of an increasing amount of Japanese material. Naftali also makes the case that this consumption of Japanese media, which is occasionally done illegally because the Chinese government frequently forbids foreign media, is a kind of resistance against both the Party and its propaganda.⁴⁵ More research is thus required to determine the impact on Chinese viewers' overall perception and memory. Moreover, as Song points out, it is challenging to determine how seriously the audience takes the anti-Japanese message in these dramas, especially in light of the rise in Chinese travel to Japan over time.⁴⁶

South Korea

Like China, anti-Japanese animosity permeates collective memory in Korea and has a significant impact on it. As was already established, it is through the ongoing reconstruction of the past that a nation's memory is formed, which in turn strengthens and develops its identity.

⁴³ *ivi* p.714

⁴⁴ *ivi* pp. 714-715

⁴⁵ *ivi* p. 717

⁴⁶ Song G. (2017). *Consuming the Anti-Japanese War On The Tv Screen In China: State Ideology, Market And Audience*. p.8

In South Korea, we can find visual depictions of the Japanese colonial era in the form of films and television shows. Especially, the Korean narrative focuses on the figures of comfort women. Visual depiction is therefore useful in influencing Korean collective memory. Korean film and television production, in contrast to Chinese production, is less concentrated on producing as much content on the Japanese colonial era. However, we may still see these resources as crucial to establishing Korea's memory. Nevertheless, because visual media are not scrutinized with the same severity as in China, we cannot in this instance consider these products to be instruments for political propaganda. A democratic nation like South Korea places a high importance on and is strongly devoted to free speech. Even so, there are still certain governmental regulations, particularly when it comes to historically controversial topics. For instance, in 2021, the administration headed by the former president of Korea, Moon Jae-in, put regulations into place to restrict incorrect accounts of specific historical events.⁴⁷ Included in these historical occurrences are, for instance, the Gwangju uprising for democracy and the Japanese colonial period, which touches on the topic of comfort women. Spreading false historical narratives or information has become prohibited by these regulations. As a result, the government has worked to suppress any alternative interpretations that it deems treasonous in order to promote just one official narrative. For instance, it is forbidden to even imply any kind of cooperation or involvement with Japanese colonialists.⁴⁸ As Korea History Society President Kim Jeong-In states this move is "a populist approach to history, appealing to widespread anti-Japanese sentiment to consolidate their political power."⁴⁹ Implying that regulating historical narratives is ultimately a political ploy that spreads an anti-Japanese sentiment in the collective perception.

Colonial period in Korean medias

From 1910 to 1945, Japan occupied Korea as a colony. This period was extremely important for the development of Korean collective identity and memory, was characterized by oppression at the hands of Japanese forces. In the opinions and perceptions of the Korean people, the legacy of the Japanese occupation still places a heavy burden. It was an extremely challenging period in Korean history; however, it is also the point which boosted the birth of modern Korea. This has also significantly impacted relations between Korea and Japan. Collective memory is a concept that is continuously being reconstructed through various forms, including visual ones

⁴⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/18/world/asia/korea-misinformation-youtube.html> accessed 20 January 2023.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

that have a strong impact in the viewer's imagination and perception. As a result, visual media are frequently used to persuade, educate, and make viewers self-conscious of their past and their identity. To survive and expand in a social setting, memory depends on media. This was the case, for instance, with the 1991 TV drama *Eyes of Dawn*, which was produced at a time when there was starting to be increased discussion about the history and memory of the colonial period. Especially, it brought to the public's attention the experience of comfort women.⁵⁰ The expression "comfort women" refers to tens of thousands of young women who were abducted either forcibly or deceptively and forced to provide sexual services for Japanese soldiers. Between 50,000 and 200,000 females were abducted, with the majority being Korean.⁵¹ In the 1990s, the tale of these crimes entered the public consciousness thanks to the accounts of comfort women survivors. Kim Hak-soon, the first Korean woman to describe her experience as a comfort woman, gave her statement on August 14, 1991. Since then, hundreds of other women who experienced the same fate have come forward to give their declarations because of her testimony. Furthermore, the day of August 14 is now recognized nationwide in Korea as Comfort Women Day since 2018.⁵² A total of 238 Korean comfort women have been reported by the Korean government since Kim Hak-soon's testimony. Of the 238 people, only ten are still alive as of January 2023.⁵³ The media is a crucial tool for preserving the narrative and memory in the community since as time goes on, a growing number of direct witnesses to events will die of old age. Visual depictions have the power to demonstrate and explain history to viewers while perpetuating memory in the public consciousness. TV has the power to promote remembrance on a large scale thus making it a valuable tool for building a nation's collective memory. This is why the presence of content about history on television is crucial because it can educate people about their history. And at the same time, it promotes an action of collective remembrance of selected events, which then has an impact on the formation of national identity. The historical drama *Eyes of Dawn* is an example of television programming with a historical topic that aims to enlighten viewers about historical events, particularly the abuse of comfort women and the atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers. The drama had a 44.3% average viewer rating, which was an enormous success.⁵⁴ A best-selling book written by Kim Seong-

⁵⁰ Kim H., Lee C. S. (2017). *Collective Memory of Japanese Military 'Comfort Women' and South Korean Media: The Case of Television Dramas, Eyes of Dawn (1991) and Snowy Road (2015)*, Asian Women, September 2017, Vol. 33, No. 3, p.89

⁵¹ *ivi* p.88

⁵² <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/21/obituaries/kim-hak-soon-overlooked.html> accessed 20 January 2023.

⁵³ <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/2022/12/27/national/socialAffairs/korea-comfort-women-lee-okseon/20221227143634932.html> accessed 20 January 2023.

⁵⁴ Kim H., Lee C. S. (2017). *Collective Memory of Japanese Military 'Comfort Women' and South Korean Media: The Case of Television Dramas, Eyes of Dawn (1991) and Snowy Road (2015)*. p. 92

Jong and released in 1981 served as the basis for the drama. Three major characters are the centre of the plot, which shifts between colonial times and the Korean War.⁵⁵ Therefore, the drama tries to present to viewers a small portion of reality of modern Korean history via the eyes of its protagonists. The comfort woman is one of the three central figures. To portray the brutality of the Japanese army and the experience of Koreans living under Japanese authority, the narrative includes violent, graphic situations. As an illustration, the main character is depicted being kidnapped and then raped by a Japanese soldier after being lured away with lies and the promise of employment.⁵⁶ There are various sequences that highlight the cruelty of comfort women's living conditions throughout the entire series. The Japanese are portrayed as being harsh and unsympathetic toward the Korean women they employ and cynically discard. Thus, a clear distinction between Koreans and Japanese is shown, with the former serving as the abused and the latter as the perpetrators. The drama *Eyes of Dawn* employs a documentary technique to convey its tale, employing a narrator who provides background information on historical events and instructive subtitles that aid viewers in understanding the events and bringing the narrative to life.⁵⁷ Furthermore, to make the product more authentic the drama included actual historical footage that depicted battles and real comfort women.⁵⁸ The documentary style of the drama made it important for disseminating information about the colonial historical context and the history of comfort women to the public. In addition, it was even employed by some schools in the 1990s to teach students about the history of comfort women.⁵⁹ As evidence of how effective it has been in bringing the conversation of comfort women into the mainstream of public debate and, as a result, affecting the public's perception of comfort women. Another drama that deals with the story of comfort women, *Snowy Road* released in 2015. The drama was a big hit with critics and was later adapted into a film of the same title. When compared to *Eyes of Dawn*'s documentary method, *Snowy Road*'s stylistic approach is different since it bases the plot more heavily on the characters' emotions. Dialogue is essential to the storytelling and the delivery of historical knowledge to the audience. Furthermore, rather of being simplistically black and white, the Japanese are shown in a more nuanced and multifaceted manner.⁶⁰ It's interesting to note that the two dramas do not just depict the conditions under which comfort women lived during the war; they also address the problems

⁵⁵ *ivi* pp.91-92

⁵⁶ *ivi* p. 94

⁵⁷ *ivi* pp. 97-98

⁵⁸ *ivi* p. 99

⁵⁹ *ivi* p. 102

⁶⁰ *ivi* p.98

and challenges they faced after the war and even in contemporary Korean culture. Thus, they emphasize the social exclusion they experienced after the war by demonstrating how Korean society originally ostracized them and implied scepticism about the truth of the sexual exploitation they endured. In addition, *Snowy Road* focuses on the current circumstances of the surviving comfort women, who are portrayed as traumatized and isolated because of the abuses they experienced.⁶¹ Both dramas thus provide a social critique on the treatment toward comfort women by Korean society. In their research of the two works, Kim and Lee compare the two dramas as being significant for the transmission of the memory of military comfort women as well as indicators and by-products of two distinct socio-political periods. Whereas *Eyes of Dawn* was crucial in highlighting the problematic history of comfort women and thus influencing the Korean collective memory about them, *Snowy Road* seeks to reverse the narrative about comfort by emphasizing their character trait as survivors, turning them from passive to active actors in their stories.⁶² Therefore, visual representations like this kind of drama are encouraged since they contribute in the building of collective memory about the colonial era and are more successful at helping viewers comprehend the reality of the circumstances facing the Korean people at the time. Furthermore, *Snowy Road* ends with a plea for viewers to keep fighting for an apology and to remember the comfort women and the injustices they endured. As alive comfort women are gradually dying out, the drama therefore attempts to transfer memories to the community and serves as a carrier of their memory.⁶³ As a result, the issue of comfort women is regarded as unsolved and remains a major impediment to current ties between Korea and Japan. Cultural memory media thus create discussion and awareness regarding a nation's past and memory that are still relevant in the contemporary. The portrayal of the Japanese occupation can also be found in other dramas such as *Bridal mask*, *Gaksital*, which was released in 2012 and enjoyed considerable success with Korean audiences reaching ratings of 27% ratings nationwide.⁶⁴ The story takes place in 1930, in the midst of the occupation, and it centres on a mythical and heroic figure who battles Japanese persecution. The narrative has a strong sentiment of patriotism and nationalism. As a representation of Korean patriotism and struggle against the occupation, the main character is disguised in a traditional Korean mask.⁶⁵ However, the narrative also presents fictional incidents that are not

⁶¹ *ivi* pp.96-97

⁶² *ivi* pp.104-105

⁶³ *ivi* p.97

⁶⁴ Steinmeyer W., Maestrejuan A. (2021). *Korean Understandings of the Occupation Through Drama: Gaksital*. Rowdy Scholar. p.3

⁶⁵ *ivi* p.8

based on actual historical occurrences.⁶⁶ According to Steinmeyer and Maestrejuan, these type of dramas are a product and a manifestation of collective Korean memory that reveal bitterness and animosity toward the Japanese occupation period that are still present in contemporary Korea.⁶⁷ The Japanese military, which is seen as pervasive, repressive, and invading Korean sovereignty, serves as the drama's primary target for anger. As a result, the conflict between Korea and Japan is perpetuated in the cultural memory of the contemporary era through the visual portrayal of the colonial era. A major theme of the drama is national and cultural identity. This is a reference to the Japanese government's enforced adoption of Japanese names as a method of cultural assimilation in the Korean colony. In Korea, this practice was regarded as the erasure of Korean identity and culture under Japanese rule. The protagonist's struggle with his Korean identity serves as a clear illustration of this conflict because he initially desires to adopt a Japanese name and disavow his Korean heritage in favour of assuming a Japanese identity. As a result, the protagonist represents an ambivalent relationship with his Korean name, which serves as a representation of his national identity and lineage. Throughout the series however, the protagonist embraces his Korean identity through wearing a Korean mask as a symbol of Korean culture.⁶⁸ The drama thus plays on a continuous juxtaposition between Korean identity and Japanese identity. The contrast between the Korean protagonist and a Japanese character throughout the story serves as another representation of this. The two characters serve as vehicles and representations of the traits connected with the identities of the two countries: whereas the Korean identity is linked to positive aspects like peace and justice, the Japanese identity is linked to negative traits like violence, brutality, and corruption.⁶⁹ This comparison of moral character emphasizes how moral character is inextricably linked to national identity. Additionally, there are undertones in the narrative that imply Japanese colonization of Korea took place through dishonest tactics and trickery, which further emphasizes the distinction between the two nationalities—one honourable and the other dishonest. This creates the perception that the colonial era was brought about by Japanese deceit and corruption rather than by open and honest warfare since Korea would have won over the Japanese invader had that been the case, according to the public and the collective memory of the Korean people. According to Steinmeyer and Maestrejuan, this narrative is the true embodiment of the contemporary Korean conception of war, which exalts Korean nationalism

⁶⁶ *ivi* p.4

⁶⁷ *ivi* p.5

⁶⁸ *ivi* pp.8-9

⁶⁹ *ivi* p. 9

and denigrates Japanese military might, viewing it as cowardly and deceptive.⁷⁰ *Battleship Island*, a movie that was released in 2017, is another piece of media that deals with the time of the occupation. Similar to *Bridal Mask*, the movie's narrative combines fictitious elements with a loosely accurate historical background. The selected style is documentary-like, and monochromatic colours are employed to make the scenes appear to be taken directly from historical footage.⁷¹ A fictional escape attempt is the focus of the story, which centres on a group of Korean miners who were transferred to Hashima Island against their will and made to labour there. The plot revolves around individuals who struggle to withstand hardship and mistreatment at the hands of the Japanese. The characters serve as representations of the historical realities that Koreans at the period faced, such as forced labour and the sexual exploitation of comfort women. The film stems from a political dispute between Korea and Japan over Hashima Island and the historical value the two nations place on it. While Korea sees it as an echoing place of a memory of abuse where Koreans were forcibly taken into mines by Japanese forces, Japan remembers it as a symbolic place for the country's industrial development. The debate started in 2015 after Hashima Island and other locations were chosen for the UNESCO World Heritage List as significant locations for the Meiji Industrial Revolution. The South Korean government objected, claiming that several of the chosen sites, such as Hashima, had utilized Koreans as forced labour during the colonial era, and requested that the employment of this practice be taken into account and acknowledged.⁷² After lengthy talks, the two nations came to an agreement, and as part of UNESCO's final judgment, Japan was compelled to include a plan to thoroughly comprehend the conditions and history of each site. The Japanese Foreign Minister Kishida afterwards insisted on using phrases to characterize the practice of forced labour implemented by the Japanese in order to minimize the brutal and exploitative conditions utilized by the Japanese Empire, therefore the Koreans did not perceive this as resolving the dispute.⁷³ The credits of the movie *Battleship Island* specifically mention the UNESCO dispute and the Japanese government's unwillingness to convey to visitors to Hashima the history of the exploitation of Korean people's labour.⁷⁴ Therefore, the film was made as a Korean protest to the dispute. The Korean characters in the movie struggle under Japanese colonialism, but ultimately, they are not shown as victims; rather, they are portrayed

⁷⁰ *ivi* p.17

⁷¹ Choi Y., Sakamoto R. (2021). *Battleship Island and the transnational dynamics of cultural memory between South Korea and Japan*, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, p. 300

⁷² *ivi* p. 299

⁷³ *ibid.*

⁷⁴ *ivi op. cit.* p. 300

as people who, in spite of their difficulties, stand up and valiantly oppose the invader. Since the middle of 2010, this mindset of shifting narratives from passive to active participants in resistance while retelling the colonial era has been visible in Korean-produced media. This pattern reflects Korea's shift away from victimization stories and toward the creation of hero figures who resist the invader in order to arouse national pride. By taking control of the narrative and taking an active role in history and memory, this narrative may be understood as a mechanism for the collective to process the difficult memories of the occupation.⁷⁵ The drama *Snowy Road* cited earlier is another illustration of this. Korean identity has always placed a strong emphasis on victimhood, and this tendency has undoubtedly had an influence on how people in modern Korea remember the colonial era. It is crucial to take note of a shift in the narrative away from victimization as it will have an effect on how the colonial era is remembered in society. *Battleship Island* is an interesting example of media that has had an important impact in Korean collective memory. The movie had a huge impact on Korean society since it came out at a period when political debates were centred on the issue of forced labour. In 2017, a South Korean court ordered Mitsubishi Heavy Industries to pay damages for using forced labour during the war, and a two-meter statue of these workers was also constructed in Seoul's central business district.⁷⁶ With its documentary-style, the movie conveys its story by leading the audience to assume that what are they seeing is the recounting of actual occurrences. At fact, the majority of miners working in Hashima were Japanese, not Korean, and the Japanese army did not control the island.⁷⁷ Despite this, the movie perpetuates this false narrative by reiterating the distinction that Korea is the victim and the nice guy while Japan is the aggressor. The exploitation of Korean workers was a true reality of the colonial period, but it was not mainly associated with Hashima Island as the film suggests. In actuality, Japan employed Korean forced workers in several locations. Instead, by portraying Hashima as a crucial location in the history of the mistreatment of Korean laborers, the movie has succeeded in affecting the collective memory of the country's people. Choi and Sakamoto contend that one of the key elements that contributed to *Battleship Island's* lasting impact on Korean memory was the film's production's aggressive advertising and marketing.⁷⁸ The emphasis on the movie's historical accuracy was really a major part of its publicity. Furthermore, by mentioning the 2015 UNESCO debate, it strengthens the credibility of the narrative and elevates Hashima Island as

⁷⁵ *ivi* p. 301

⁷⁶ *ivi* p.306

⁷⁷ *ivi op. cit.* p. 300

⁷⁸ *ivi op. cit.* p. 301

a representative of Korean resistance to Japan. Additionally, the marketing team for the movie released educational videos on the island's history and the exploitation that took place there. To give these films more authority, they were presented by a renowned scholar from South Korea.⁷⁹ As a result, the movie received the same treatment from the media and the general public as if it were an exposure of a case of abuse that needed to be discussed.⁸⁰ Famous celebrities like Song Joong Ki and So Ji Sub, who are well-known both domestically and abroad, were also cast in the movie in order to draw both Korean and non-Korean audiences and generate attention for the movie.⁸¹ The employment of famous idols to draw young viewers is a technique that is also seen in Chinese TV shows about the War of Resistance. The movie attracted criticism from the Korean press despite the significant hype around it and its intention to convey a patriotic message. Some people criticized the movie for not being sufficiently anti-Japanese since it alluded to Koreans who collaborated with Japanese soldiers. For some of his remarks on the complexity of the colonial era, the filmmaker was also attacked and seen as pro-Japanese.⁸² These responses demonstrate the lack of space for discussion of alternative colonial perspectives among Korean audiences. The right-wing conservative media in Japan has advocated for combating this false narrative, especially in light of the film's international resonance, and has attacked the movie as a product of anti-Japanese propaganda that distorts history.⁸³ The movie was also addressed in the media in China, but in this instance, it was done so in order to stir up hostility toward Japan and to discuss how the Japanese military mistreated Chinese forced labourers.⁸⁴ The movie has been employed on a global scale to generate discussion and raise awareness about the Japanese Empire's practice of labour exploitation.⁸⁵ Visual representations like *Battleship Island* are an illustration of how media can affect memory and spark discussions about the past and memories. It is also a prime example of memory manipulation since memory is thus mediated through several forms and transforms into a single, straightforward memory with no room for complexity or alternate versions. Furthermore, it is an illustration of memory that transcends national boundaries. As a result, *Battleship Island* had a significant role in creating the legacy of Hashima Island and turning it into a symbol of the fight to have Japan acknowledge the abuse of forced workers during the colonial era. Visual representations of the colonial era are still central in the public discourse and entertainment.

⁷⁹ *ivi* p.302

⁸⁰ *ivi* pp. 302-303

⁸¹ *ivi* p. 303

⁸² *ivi* p. 304

⁸³ *ivi* p. 305

⁸⁴ *ivi* pp. 306-307

⁸⁵ *ivi* p. 307

The most recent example of this is the drama *Pachinko*, which was made by Apple TV+ and is based on the best-selling book by Lee Min Jin. The drama, which has received a lot of positive feedback from reviewers and even overseas viewers, tells the tale of a Korean family who move to Osaka in the early 20th century. The zainichi's tough life in Japan, which was plagued by prejudice and persecution, serves as the story's central theme and source of inspiration. The word "zainichi" refers to immigrants from Korea, the biggest ethnic group in Japan. Most of them are descended from people who were transported to Japan against their will as labourers during World War II.⁸⁶ Except for a small number of people who attacked the drama on social media as being anti-Japanese, the drama in Japan was largely ignored.⁸⁷ The drama is another example of a story that demonstrates Korean resilience and determination in reacting to discrimination and mistreatment from the Japanese. When this happens, hatred of Japanese people is less of a focus and instead concentrates on Korean identity and what it means to be Korean. The collective memory of the Korean people is profoundly influenced by the colonial era, yet at the same time, the emphasis is on preserving and honouring Korean identity, culture, and values. Furthermore, the visual depictions of the colonization era demonstrate that the period is remembered as a traumatic one for the Korean people, a time that is characterized by the loss of national sovereignty. By emphasizing the national pride of Korean resistance and national revenge, the visual representations express themselves in this way as a means of coping with the past and reclaiming the narrative. The media analysed perpetuate a negative image of the Japanese that inevitably imprints in modern perception and collective Korean memory an animosity and anti-Japanese sentiments and thus creates conflict that makes reconciliation difficult. It also perpetuates a sense of national identity as opposed to Japanese identity making the two nations inevitably at odds even today. This can also be applied in the case of representations of the War of Resistance in China. Collective memory is a selective reconstruction of the past since it is by its very nature emotionally charged. As a result, it may change over time. However, if the media choose to perpetuate specific events and the way it portrays them are causes of conflict, it is unavoidably a source of resentment. Obviously evolving over time, one day perhaps the collective memory will emphasize a more nuanced narrative and focus on positive aspects, at which point perhaps a reconciliation may be feasible. Of course, this will only be possible when Japan also acknowledges its past and takes full responsibility for the crimes it committed, so that Koreans perceive the stance as genuine and

⁸⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/21/pachinko-tv-series-korea-japan-min-jin-lee> accessed 23 January 2023.

⁸⁷ <https://slate.com/culture/2022/04/pachinko-history-korea-japan-apple-tv.html> accessed 23 January 2023.

consistent over time. It is therefore a relationship that needs to be consolidated and restored to two sides.

Japan

Like its neighbouring countries, Japan has also used many forms of visual representation—movies, TV shows, manga, and anime—to depict the war. In contrast to China, Japan respects freedom of speech and prohibits censorship as stipulated in Article 21 of the Japanese Constitution.⁸⁸ Therefore, there is no obvious state influence over the media that is developed. Japanese national sentiments make the subject of Second World War delicate. Due to the fact that it evokes memories of a time which some people view it with suffering and shame while others with pride and nostalgia. The war is still a major part of the collective memory of contemporary Japan, even though it has been 70 years. It has consequently served as a major creative inspiration for the creation of films and other visual works. Japan advocates a more varied and complex interpretation of the war, in contrast to China, which pushes a singular narrative of the conflict based on anti-Japanese and anti-nationalist party sentiments. In the Japanese political system, war is a key issue that is exploited to advance political agendas. On the one hand, the left uses it to advance the pacifism of Article 9 of the constitution, while on the other, the right uses it to further nationalist and militaristic views. And because of its memories of the conflict, Japan welcomed the pacifism placed upon it by the American occupiers. Then again, there are also opposing viewpoints, particularly among conservative party members who wish to remember the battle with pride rather than perpetuating a masochistic and humiliating viewpoint. As a result, there is a perception of war as a time when the Japanese people came together in their pain and struggle to display bravery and honour. Therefore, in this viewpoint, Japan is no longer an aggressor; rather, the war was a form of both self-defence and solidarity with other Asian nations in an effort to rid them of Western white colonialism.⁸⁹ To date, attempts to provide meaning to the conflict have been a major focus of public conversation and visual works created in post-war Japan. Comparing how war is portrayed visually in China and Japan is particularly intriguing because it reveals how differently the two nations focus on various aspects and descriptions of conflict. In contrast to China, where the Japanese crimes and brutality are shown in great detail, Japan places more attention on the bravery, heroism, and sufferings that the Japanese troops endured in their

⁸⁸ https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html accessed 24 January 2023

⁸⁹ Tam, K. and Tsu, T.Y. and Wilson, S. (2014). *The Second World War in postwar Chinese and Japanese film, in Chinese and Japanese Films on the Second World War*, Routledge p. 16

appalling living circumstances.⁹⁰ The Chinese people are therefore encouraged to engage in hostility in confrontation with Japan, while on the other hand, in Japan, the issue of Japanese aggression and colonialism is avoided in favour of providing a background and context for the war so that the Japanese people can come to terms with and comfort themselves about their wartime past. As a result, it appears that Japan is more focused on handling the war nationally without international conflict. The prevailing inclination is to highlight pacifism and the atrocities of the conflict without explicitly acknowledging and debating Japan's position as the aggressor. War memories are established to be prevalent in Japanese culture, as previously seen in China and Korea, and occasionally even harmful due to their ability to sway and distort how the Japanese view the past.

Japanese War Movies

The memory of war in Japanese society has changed through time, just as the idea of collective memory is a notion that is always changing. Each period's film releases contributed to shaping how the conflict is remembered in the public consciousness. As socio-political circumstances have evolved throughout time, likewise, has the way that World War II is portrayed in Japanese cinema. This notwithstanding, it has continued to be a major and prevalent motif in Japanese filmmaking. Films, moreover, have reflected not just political developments but also the general societal impression of the conflict and the collective memory of it. In some cases, they have even contributed to its formation. After the end of the war, Japan was subjected to occupation by the Allied forces led by the United States until 1952. General Douglas MacArthur, who was designated Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces (SCAP), headed the American forces during the occupation. The objective was to democratize, demilitarize, and restructure Japan. Therefore, the purpose was to eliminate any threat of conflict coming from Japan. In fact, it was at this time that Article 9 of the current Japanese constitution, which formally renounces war and militarism, took effect. The American troops employed a number of strategies, including the employment of film, which was seen as a significant medium for democratizing the populace and educating the people to promote pacifism in Japanese society. Because of this, the Americans imposed strict restrictions on the media and war stories, which had to conform to the version supported by the Tokyo Trial ruling. The subjects addressed in the films, which were suggested by SCAP, were characterized by an emphasis on the individual, on female characters, on the oppressive aspect of Japan's militarist culture, and on the valiant resistance

⁹⁰ *ivi* p.18

of Japanese soldiers. Additionally, showing the atomic bombings was prohibited.⁹¹ In accordance with the American mission to eradicate militarism from Japanese society also in the films they sought to eliminate any notion of militarism. Films produced during the Occupation period were thus characterized by a strong anti-war sentiment.⁹² Victimhood sentiments permeated the war narrative under the Occupation. In fact, the majority of Japanese people who were coming to grips with their war guilt saw themselves as war victims. The United States' decision to not bring charges against Emperor Hirohito and their subsequent easing of the purging of public personalities who had been removed from prominent positions in politics and business were factors in this outcome.⁹³ Thus, the films made during this time period were primarily concerned with the hardship of citizens, victimization, and putting the military elite, rather than the Emperor, to blame for the war and all of its crimes. All limitations that had been in place before the Occupation ended were lifted, and as a result, formerly controversial subjects related to the conflict started to be discussed. Post Occupation films continued to be characterized by a general sense of victimhood that was slowly extended not only to civilians but also to Japanese soldiers. The quintessential figure used to channel the casualty of war were the kamikaze. Japan thus saw itself as a victim of the war. The storyline of the movies made during this time period is centred on soldiers who bravely commit to missions from which they would never return. As a result, the troops suffer from both the brutality of combat and military mentality.⁹⁴ The films of this era, as noted by Desser, criticize Japanese militarism and the war at the same time, but there is implicitly a determination to avoid providing context for the conflict in this propensity.⁹⁵ In other words, the movies criticize the cruelty of the war as such but do not explain why Japan is at war or its obligations as an aggressor. However, there are certain instances, such as *The Human Condition* trilogy, which was released between 1959 and 1961, in contrast to other movies made at the time, depicts the forced labour that Chinese and Korean people underwent during the war.⁹⁶ In a similar manner, *Story of a Prostitute* (1964) likewise addresses controversial subjects by mentioning sexual exploitation throughout the conflict. The movie attacks a system that oppresses both men and women by focusing on the

⁹¹ Stegewerns D. (2014). *Establishing the genre of the revisionist war film: The Shin-Tōhō body of post-Occupation war films in Japan*, in Tam, K. and Tsu, T.Y. and Wilson, S., *Chinese and Japanese Films on the Second World War*, Routledge pp.136-137

⁹² Desser D. (2016). *Under the Flag of the Rising Sun Imagining the Pacific War in the Japanese Cinema*, in Berry M. & Sawada C., *Divided Lenses: Screen Memories of War in East Asia*, University of Hawai'i Press p.76

⁹³ *ibid.*

⁹⁴ *ivi* p. 77

⁹⁵ *ivi* p.79

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

character of a Korean prostitute.⁹⁷ Even though the movie features a Korean prostitute, the heroine actively chooses to become a prostitute, therefore she does not represent the majority of women who were sexually exploited during the conflict. Japanese military movies therefore typically neglect the subject of comfort women. They are silent characters that only make an appearance in one scene of the movie *Red Angel*, and it is unknown what country they are from. Desser contends that portraying them as silent is meaningful and parallels the reality of military comfort women.⁹⁸ Different perspectives on the war throughout the post-occupation era surely had an impact on how the war is remembered collectively in Japan. On the one side, we have leftist biased movies that only portray the war in a negative way, while on the other, people gradually start to perceive the conflict in a more positive perspective. Stegewerns identifies the Shin-Tōhō film company as the leader in this case.⁹⁹ The concepts established by SCAP were inverted in the war movies made by Shin-Tōhō Studio and were substituted with anti-feminist and anti-individualist ideals. The result is films that focus on group and group sacrifice, feelings of honour, courage, and patriotism. Stegewerns also argues that the films bear similarities to wartime propaganda films.¹⁰⁰ For example, in fact, Shin-Tōhō in its collection of films also features so-called "friendship films" characterized by brave Japanese soldiers showing other Asians, Japanese virtues and uniting against the common enemy usually Western or Chinese.¹⁰¹ The avoidance of any mention of Japanese involvement in the war is another trait of Shin-Tōhō films; this is accomplished by giving the enemy an impersonal portrayal and relying instead on images of planes and aircraft.¹⁰² Because the adversary lacks a face in this manner, it becomes a remote and unseen notion. It is also crucial that blood and violent scenes were avoided, as doing so would have made it more impossible to avoid confronting Japan's role in the war.¹⁰³ By omitting discussion of tensions and disputes between Japan and other Asian countries, the adversary is likewise never Asian but rather American. In the Shin-Tōhō movies, Japan is indeed defeated by the Americans, but only due to America's advantage in science and technology, since Japan is depicted as being superior in spirit and bravery.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, Shin-Tōhō films contributed in creating a new narrative of the war that echoed wartime propaganda

⁹⁷ *ivi* p. 80

⁹⁸ *ivi* p. 87

⁹⁹ Stegewerns D. (2014). *Establishing the genre of the revisionist war film: The Shin-Tōhō body of post-Occupation war films in Japan*, in Tam, K. and Tsu, T.Y. and Wilson, S., *Chinese and Japanese Films on the Second World War*. p.138

¹⁰⁰ *ivi* p. 145

¹⁰¹ *ivi* p.140

¹⁰² *ivi* p.146

¹⁰³ *ivi* pp.146-147

¹⁰⁴ *ivi* pp.148-149

through the use of military songs, depictions of the Japanese flag, and by casting doubt on the outcome of the Tokyo Trial, thus raised questions about the guilt of wartime commanders. Even though the studio didn't have the same prominence as other studios, it may be stated that by producing so many films in the war genre, it inadvertently contributed to the development of a revisionist view of the conflict and, as a result, the development of the war's collective memory.¹⁰⁵ In the 1960s, Japanese film production for the most part showed a critical stance regarding the war. Things changed from the 1990s when a revisionist movement began to take hold. Throughout the 1990s there was a surge in discussion and remembrance of the war and the war crimes committed by Japan. Debates on Japan's war crimes also grew after Kim Hak-sun, a comfort woman, gave her first statement in 1991, requesting that Japan take accountability and apologize for military sexual exploitation. Furthermore, between 1993 and 1996, the Japanese government released statements denouncing and acknowledging Japan's position as an aggressor against Asian countries. As a result, a nationalist revisionist movement began to emerge in order to combat the excessively masochistic perception of Japan as a violent society with a shameful past.¹⁰⁶ The films made during this time period, which are characterized by a victimizing attitude, national pride, and nostalgia, reflect this attitude. The 1998 movie *Pride: The Fateful Moment*, which is seen as an illustration of historical revisionism, is one example of this. As a result, the movie clearly presents some of the war's events in a nationalist light. For instance, it makes it abundantly clear that the United States forced Japan to enter the conflict, that the Nanjing Massacre is a blatant lie, and that Tōjō Hideki, the country's prime minister at the time, was an honourable man who gave his life in defence of his nation.¹⁰⁷ The movie highlights the difference between Japan and the US through words made by Tōjō's character: Tōjō claims that he cannot respect MacArthur since he deserted his soldiers in 1942. With this assertion, the movie aims to demonstrate the significant distinction between Japan, which is proud and noble, and the United States, which is viewed as being cowardly.¹⁰⁸ Similarly to China and South Korea, Japan displays the same need to build the concept of the "Other" in its narrative of the war, which is in their eyes is the United States. Therefore, the "Other" is inferior and cowardly while Japan is proud and honourable. The movie employs a

¹⁰⁵ *ivi* p. 150

¹⁰⁶ Del Bene M. (2014), *A past to be ashamed of or proud of? Echoes of the Fifteen-Year War in Japanese film*, in Tam, K. and Tsu, T.Y. and Wilson, S., *Chinese and Japanese Films on the Second World War*, Routledge p. 225

¹⁰⁷ Desser D. (2016), *Under the Flag of the Rising Sun Imagining the Pacific War in the Japanese Cinema* in Berry M. & Sawada C., *Divided Lenses: Screen Memories of War in East Asia*. p.89

¹⁰⁸ Del Bene M. (2014), *A past to be ashamed of or proud of? Echoes of the Fifteen-Year War in Japanese film*, in Tam, K. and Tsu, T.Y. and Wilson, S., *Chinese and Japanese Films on the Second World War*, pp.227-228

documentary format by displaying re-enactments of chosen events to develop a chosen narrative and sway the spectator in order to look more authentic and accurate to history in the recounting of the facts.¹⁰⁹ Del Bene makes the case that movies like *Pride* influenced and assisted the Japanese film industry in making movies with a more optimistic viewpoint so that audiences might connect with their past. The release of revisionist textbooks like *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* in 2001, which encouraged publishers to portray the conflict in a more sympathetic light, mirrors this as well.¹¹⁰ Similarly, also from the 2000s onward, films with a revisionist nationalist stamp have been produced. Like the 2008 right-wing Mizushima Satoru film *The Truth of Nanjing*, which was financed by conservative Channel Sakura. The movie was made as a retaliation to an American documentary on the Nanjing massacre that had been shown at the Sundance Film Festival in 2007, hence it was aimed at a global audience.¹¹¹ As a result, Mizushima Satoru's movie was made in an effort to present the “actual” facts surrounding the Nanjing tragedy. The movie questions China's involvement in the catastrophe since it argues that Japan's role in the tragedy was overstated. The story being disclosed here aims to alter the viewpoint of an incident that is typically only reported from one side and wrongly blames the Japanese for the atrocities. The movie was supported by a vigorous attempt to show that Japan was innocent; in fact, a website devoted to the "truth about Nanjing" was launched with information suggesting that the massacre was fake and a Chinese propaganda trick.¹¹² Despite this, the movie did not do well with the Japanese audience because they felt it was too radical in their perspective. As a result, movies of this type aim to tell the story of the war by highlighting the moral excellence and dignity of Japan, and occasionally even by contesting the decision of the Tokyo Trial in an effort to construct a new historical truth. There is little mention of other Asian nations; the description of the war is harsh, but it primarily focuses on the suffering of Japanese people and troops. The war itself or, at the most, the Americans who wrongly accused Japan constitute the enemy. This is also connected to the dropping of the atomic bombs by the Americans in Nagasaki and Hiroshima, which left a lasting impression on Japanese collective memory. Films on the bomb do appear to be scarce.¹¹³ However, Del Bene contends that revisionist films are more of a societal effort to exorcise the trauma of war and therefore a way of dealing with a terrible legacy of aggression and suffering

¹⁰⁹ *ivi* p.227

¹¹⁰ *ivi* p.226

¹¹¹ Desser D. (2016), *Under the Flag of the Rising Sun Imagining the Pacific War in the Japanese Cinema* in Berry M. & Sawada C., *Divided Lenses: Screen Memories of War in East Asia*. op. cit. 89

¹¹² *ivi* pp.89-90

¹¹³ *ivi* p.97

than a forerunner to a revival of Japanese militarism.¹¹⁴ Although there has been a recent tendency toward revisionist movies, it cannot be stated that there is just this sort of perspective, since Japan continues to see and remember the war in a far more complicated and nuanced manner, always seeking an explanation and attempting to understand this traumatic history. In contrast, Studio Ghibli has developed a reputation for producing animated films with pacifist and anti-war themes, portraying war as a terrible occurrence that should never be forgotten or repeated. *A Grave for Fireflies* by Isao Takahata from 1988 or *The Wind Rises* by Hayao Miyazaki from 2013 are just two examples of movies that use the theme of war to teach viewers a lesson and develop pacifist emotions in them. For instance, *A Grave for Fireflies*, which centres the story on two children, demonstrates the severity and violence of war by inciting anti-war feelings in the audience.¹¹⁵ *The Wind Rises* similarly seeks to make viewers remember the war and persuade them to choose pacifism, while still avoiding criticizing Japan's propensity for violence. Additionally, Miyazaki's personal convictions and anti-war principles may have had an influence.¹¹⁶ Unquestionably, the subsequent visual depictions of war that have persisted from the post-war era to the present have affected and shaped collective memory. The memory of the war in Japan is therefore a complicated, challenging, and multidimensional reflection of the Japanese society's struggle to comprehend and embrace their history. This is due to the various representations and interpretations that have been made of it.

¹¹⁴ Del Bene M. (2014). *A past to be ashamed of or proud of? Echoes of the Fifteen-Year War in Japanese film*, in Tam, K. and Tsu, T.Y. and Wilson, S., *Chinese and Japanese Films on the Second World War*, p.240

¹¹⁵ Akimoto D. (2014). *Peace education through the animated film "Grave of the Fireflies"* *Physical, psychological, and structural violence of war*, *Ritsumeikan Journal of Asia Pacific Studies* Volume 33, p. 41

¹¹⁶ Akimoto D. (2014). *War Memory, War Responsibility and Anti-War Pacifism in Director Miyazaki's The Wind Rises (Kaze Tachinu)*. p.67

CHAPTER 4

PLACES

Places of Memory

Memory has been linked to places from the beginning of time. When we talk about “the memory of places,” we might refer to a memory that is either localized in a location or one that has a place as its object.¹ As a result, it suggests that places may serve as both memory subjects and memory bearers. According to Aleida Assmann, the development of cultural spaces of recollection depends on the existence of specific locations.² Places serve as a memory's intermediary, introducing us to an unseen past and preserving our connection to it.³ Places have the power to cement memories by tying them to a specific physical place, but they also have the power to survive through time by providing memory a temporal continuity. Furthermore, places can become emotionally charged symbols that serve individuals to locate a cherished memory. The memory of an event is thus channelled within a place; the place consequently has the power to reactivate the memory and the emotions associated with it. This is applicable to both the individual and the group such as the family or a nation. Individuals and groups frequently develop a strong connection with a certain location through time, creating memories associated with a particular geographic area. Therefore, we have places that Assmann defines as generational, linked to the memory of the group or a family that are characterized by evolution over time.⁴ In contrast to this, memorial sites can be identified by a sharp severance with history; in other words, there is a clear distinction between the past and present at these places. Wrecks and ruins are an illustration of this idea. They stand immobile in the past and serve as a reminder of a life that is no longer there, with no link to the present that develops and takes its course. Pierre Nora speaks of “lieux de mémoire” which are places that represent what

¹ Assmann A. (2015). *Ricordare: forme e mutamenti della memoria culturale*. Il mulino p. 331

² *ivi* p. 332

³ *ivi* p. 368

⁴ *ivi* p. 343

remains of what is no longer exists; to ensure that they continue to exist requires the help of the narrative of a story.⁵ By describing places as either repository of memory or forms of memorialization, Nora expands on the idea of places of memory. Any significant object, whether visible or intangible, that has been transformed into a symbol of a community's or country's memorial history, via human initiative, is what the historian refers to as *lieu de mémoire*.⁶ Telling the story allows the places of memory to be given context and value, which become essential elements of the narrative and thus references for cultural memory. However, the places of memory are not eternal in that they are material and therefore transient thus they need a narrative and interest in the past, this is no doubt favoured in a society that looks to the past as its foundation. In this way, places are a support for the transmission of memory in the present and posterity. Thus, places provide a geographic context for the history and memory narrative. Additionally, they enable individuals who go there today to revisit memories of times gone by. Ruins without context and history are relegated to places of oblivion. If society stops transmitting remembrance, places of remembrance lose their meaning and value. Therefore, the historian has the task of researching the history and make sense of the places and ruins. In this way, the transmission of memory is secured through time. Writing and images, as mediators of memory, are complementary to places in the transmission of memory. So that even if the material is destroyed, they can still guarantee its existence.⁷ The message intended for future generations is inscribed in the stones of places of memory, which are man-made from human consciousness.⁸ In this sense, they contain the memory of the past, which then travels through their materiality to the present. Thus, places get ingrained in our collective memory. As sites that recall a violent, bloody, and tragic past, locations of remembrance can also serve as sites of trauma. As the group defines its memories of suffering as tying and irreplaceable to its history, those locations take on a high significance in historical and societal memory.⁹ In this case the narration of the memory of suffering is more difficult because of the emotional charge it carries. To promote national identity, monuments, places of memory, and commemoration days are crucial. By providing people with a shared past to unite around and attach to their group identity, these tools help people find social cohesion. Giving people a way to remember the past by designating locations or days is thus helpful to strengthen a community. When

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Nora P. (1996). "Preface to English Language Edition: From *Lieux de memoire* to *Realms of Memory*", in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past* ed, p. XVII

⁷ Assmann A. (2015). *Ricordare: forme e mutamenti della memoria culturale*. p. 353

⁸ *ivi* pp. 362-363

⁹ *ivi* p. 364

talking about memory-related places, the first examples that come to mind are monuments and museums. Both are products of human labour. Monuments are statues or buildings erected to commemorate a particular event or historical figure. Furthermore, the term "monument" comes from the Latin "monumentum," which derives from the verb "monere," which means "to remember."¹⁰ Museums, on the other hand, are buildings or institutions devoted to the preservation and exhibition of historical, artistic, or scientific artifacts. Historical-type museums are specifically devoted to the preservation of history and thus are essential for the transmission of memory to the collective and thus to posterity. Museums and monuments are significant tools for fostering collective memory since they are accessible to the public. According to Black, people's decisions on what should be displayed in museums ultimately determine what is and is not history as well as what and how it should be remembered and what should be forgotten.¹¹ Countries in the north-eastern region widely implement the use of memorial sites to commemorate their history including that of war and colonialism. In this way they cement their national identity and shape the historical narrative they have decided to reproduce.

Japan

The Yasukuni Jinja (Shrine) is undoubtedly one of the places in East Asia that has generated the most controversy. Japanese prime leaders' trips to the altar during the past three decades have led to several diplomatic disputes with China and South Korea. The Yasukuni Shrine is seen throughout East Asia as a powerful reminder of Japan's wartime legacy and a source of regional instability since it serves as a constant reminder of the crimes committed by Japan in the first half of the 20th century. Mention of the Yasukuni shrine is especially contentious in China. For instance, following resurfacing images of Chinese actor Zhang Zhehan at the Yasukuni shrine in 2021, the actor was blacklisted, faced a public boycott, had his works blocked from all streaming platforms, and any mention of his name online was removed.¹² The actor was singled out as a traitor to the country and the gesture received widespread criticism for being insulting. The Yasukuni shrine stands on Kudan Hill, in Tokyo and was established in 1869 for the purpose of commemorating and honouring those who died for the homeland. The term "Yasukuni" means "to preserve peace for the entire nation," so it is an altar aimed at

¹⁰ Lee J. (2018). *Yasukuni and Hiroshima in Clash? War and Peace Museums in Contemporary Japan*, Pacific Focus, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1 (April 2018), p. 10

¹¹Black G. (2011). *Museums, Memory and History*, Cultural and Social History 8 (3), p.415

¹² <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202108/1232091.shtml> accessed 19 January 2023.

bringing and building a peaceful nation.¹³ The name is quite controversial considering that the shrine holds the symbol of Japan's militaristic and imperial past in the viewpoint of Japan's neighbouring nations. On the website for the Yasukuni shrine, there is a list of those who have been honoured for their contributions to Japan, including Koreans and Taiwanese who died as Japanese and even those who were judged war criminals, including Tōjō Hideki, prime minister of Japan during World War II. The altar's main aim is to remember those who gave their lives in service to Japan, thus individuals who are chosen to be honoured there are respected and worshipped. Because of this, the presence of problematic individuals who were key players in the invasion of China and the colonization of Korea is met with disapproval and outrage. Praising war criminals is perceived by nations who were wronged by Japan as a refusal to repent and apologize for such wrongdoings and as a demonstration of pride in Japan's militaristic past. A total of 2.4 million people is remembered at the Yasukuni shrine, including 14 Class A war criminals and 1068 others who have been found guilty of war crimes.¹⁴ Tension has also been caused by the inclusion of Korean people's names. In 2013, 27 Koreans requested a Japanese court to have the names of their relatives removed from the Yasukuni Shrine. This is since most of the Koreans honoured on the altar were Koreans who were coerced into serving Japan during the war and died as a result to do so. Family members of the Koreans who perished are still seeking to have their names removed because they do not want them to be identified with fighting for Japan or honoured alongside war criminals. However, in 2019 the Japanese court rejected the request without explanation.¹⁵ According to Japanese tradition, rituals are celebrated with food offerings every day. The shrine is thus a place of remembrance that is experienced collectively by 5 million visitors each year that pay a visit to commemorate those who have died in wars.¹⁶ Despite recognizing the traditional and religious significance of the celebration and commemoration of the deceased, politicians' visits have invested the shrine with a strong political, nationalist, and imperialist significance. Outrage and tension with Japan's neighbouring countries have resulted from visits by prominent figures of Japanese politics. Junichiro Koizumi, former prime minister, was one of the most outspoken advocates of visiting the Yasukuni Shrine. In 2005, former President Koizumi's visit triggered such diplomatic tensions with China that a planned visit by the Japanese foreign minister to China

¹³ Yasukuni Jinja website <https://www.yasukuni.or.jp/english/about/history.html> accessed 22 January 2023.

¹⁴ http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2019/06/120_269713.html accessed 22 January 2023.

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ Yasukuni Jinja website <https://www.yasukuni.or.jp/english/about/history.html> accessed 22 January 2023.

was cancelled.¹⁷ Koizumi's successor, Shinzo Abe openly proclaimed himself in favour of visits to the shrine, and he himself paid a visit in 2013 when he was in office.¹⁸ Recently even current Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, while not having personally visited the shrine donated offerings on several occasions in 2022 prompting criticism from the Korean government.¹⁹ As a result, the Yasukuni shrine is a contentious memorial, and more broadly, it is a part of a discussion about Japan's challenging collective memory. A general sentiment of looking back proudly on the conflict is legitimized by the continued partnership between the shrine and the government. Remembering and celebrating military deaths, but especially those of war criminals, promotes a positive view of the past, which is a past that should not be forgotten but also should not be ashamed of. The collective memory of Japan is thus influenced by the commemoration of the Yasukuni shrine. Near the shrine, stands a museum dedicated to the history of those who died for Japan, the Yushukan Museum. The Yushukan museum, like the Yasukuni shrine, is a significant site of commemoration; as of 2014, it had an average of 821 visitors per day, with an annual attendance of about 300,000 people.²⁰ Opened in 1882, the museum houses a collection of 100,000 items including paintings, armours, notes from the war dead and weapons. Its goal is to teach the "sentiments" and "achievements" of the war dead defined as "noble spirits of fallen heroes."²¹ Although the Yushukan leaflet refers to the people who died for their country as "fallen heroes" in the English version, the Japanese phrase used is kami, which may be translated as a deity or spirit and gives the worship of the dead a religious connotation.²² Also elevating the celebration of the people honoured in the Yasukuni shrine as true deities. However, the museum also showcases the personal items and photographs of the war dead, giving visitors a chance to put a name and a story to the individuals remembered and evoking strong feelings in them that make them feel more connected to the fallen soldiers. Moreover, highlighting the sacrifice and devotion of soldiers for the nation helps fostering national pride within the visitors. By highlighting the principles and sacrifices of those who fought, the Yushukan Museum chronicles the history of battles in Japanese history. The term "The China Incident" is used in the museum's description of the Second Sino-Japanese War, which lasted

¹⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/18/world/asia/angry-at-koizumi-china-cancels-highlevel-visit.html> accessed 21 January 2023.

¹⁸ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-25517205> accessed 23 January 2023.

¹⁹ <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14603910> accessed 23 January 2023.

²⁰ <https://qz.com/223897/the-story-of-world-war-ii-according-to-japans-controversial-war-museum#:~:text=About%20300%2C000%20people%20visit%20the,of%20821%20people%20a%20day>. accessed 22 January 2023.

²¹ Yushukan English pamphlet

https://www.yasukuni.or.jp/assets/pdf/english/yusyukan/yushukan_pamphlet_en.pdf

²² Gustafsson K. (2011). *Narratives and Bilateral Relations: Rethinking the 'History Issue' in Sino-Japanese Relations*. PhD Thesis. Stockholm University, Sweden. pp.222-223

from 1937 until 1945. The phrase selected seems to imply a desire to minimize Japan's involvement in the invasion of China.²³ The museum also chronicles the time period known as The Greatest East Asia War, a designation for the portion of World War II that was fought in East Asia. The actions of Japan and the United States are mostly discussed in the descriptions of the museum's halls. The attempts Japan made to prevent war with the United States are also mentioned in one chamber. A significant collection of military equipment, including weapons, warplanes, and artifacts commemorating the symbol of the Rising Sun, is also on display at the museum. The narrative that therefore emerges is a narrative of the war that focuses on Japanese militarism and the sacrifice and values of Japanese soldiers. Little mention is therefore made of Japan's role as an invader of China. The articles exhibited also seem to suggest a celebration rather than a denial of Japan's militaristic past. In light of this, the memorialization we discover is consistent with what was previously observed while examining World War II-themed Japanese films. The commemoration of the war in Japan appears to be primarily focused on the negative effects of the war endured by the Japanese people, omitting to mention the war crimes and practices carried out by Japan during the war, such as the Nanjing Massacre, Unit 731, and the sexual exploitation of military comfort women. The Yushukan Museum, however, is a privately owned and operated religious organization and not a state museum. As a result, the story presented therein does not necessarily represent the state's point of view. Even though it could appear that the government has approved of this commemoration of war history given the Prime Ministers', Ministers', and Lawmakers' visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. Furthermore, the fact that the honoured individuals gave their lives in defence of the homeland institutionalizes their story of sacrifice in the history of the country, giving the commemoration performed inside the Yasukuni shrine and the Yushukan museum a nationalist connotation.²⁴ The narrative within the museum also, by emphasizing the sacrifice committed by the heroic war dead, ultimately fails to mention why Japan was at war and who was responsible for it.²⁵ The protagonists in the war narrative are thus, those who died for Japan. The collective aspect of history is highlighted within the museum's narrative of events by employing phrases like "our country" and "our army".²⁶ Visitors can thus connect to and experience the story being recounted as their own due to this fact. By fostering a sense of national identification, the events

²³ Yushukan English pamphlet

https://www.yasukuni.or.jp/assets/pdf/english/yusyukan/yushukan_pamphlet_en.pdf

²⁴ Gustafsson K. (2011). *Narratives and Bilateral Relations: Rethinking the 'History Issue' in Sino-Japanese Relations*. p.223

²⁵ *ivi* p.224

²⁶ *ivi* p. 231

are strengthened by becoming ingrained in the memories of individuals who visit the museum and feel as part of their country. Much attention is paid to the choice of words and events, in order to convey the chosen narrative. This is especially evident in the narration of events that include China. The story emphasizes the difference between the Japanese and their actions from those of the Chinese. The chosen wording suggests that the military actions carried out by the Japanese are also justified in their use of violence. While as for the Chinese actions they appear indiscriminate, not justified, and are therefore explicitly described to convey the brutality used by the Chinese forces.²⁷ The narrative is detailed even at times when describing military actions of Japan depicted in a positive light. In contrast, however, the narrative becomes more vague and obscure when it comes to controversial situations such as the Nanjing Massacre, which is referred to as "the Nanjing Incident."²⁸ Due to a number of factors, such as the fact that the Chinese disregarded Japanese advice to surrender or that Chinese soldiers were disguising themselves as civilians, and the fact that General Matsui specifically ordered that the seizure of the city be carried out in a legal and orderly manner, the description of the event implies Chinese responsibility for the massacre.²⁹ Thus, assigning blame to the Japanese for the incident is avoided in the museum's story. In addition, the fact that General Matsui was killed and designated as a Class A war criminal raises questions about the outcome of the Tokyo Trial. In this way, the museum's exhibit aims to demonstrate how unreasonable and incorrect the Tokyo Trial was.³⁰ The critical tone toward the Tokyo Trial verdict is also suggested by the statue erected inside the garden of the Yasukuni shrine dedicated to Dr. Radhabinod Pal who was the representative from India during the Tokyo Trial in 1946. The monument honouring Dr. Pal was erected in 2005 to celebrate his courage and passion. Dr. Pal was the only one among the judges "who pointed out the illegality of the tribunal and judged all the defendants as not guilty based on his expertise in international law."³¹ Embracing the only judge who disagreed with the Tokyo Trial result, in which multiple war criminals were charged, shows that Japan does not accept the blame and guilt of war crimes as well as the judgement. It is also suggested within the museum that the Japanese occupation in other Asian countries actually contributed to and led to the independence of these countries.³² As a result, in the perspective of countries that were victims of Japanese imperialism, the narrative and interpretation of the war presented at

²⁷ *ivi* p. 232

²⁸ *ivi* p. 233

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ Yasukuni Jinja website <https://www.yasukuni.or.jp/mobile-guide/en/keidai/mapnaien/19.html> accessed 24 January 2023.

³² <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202108/1232425.shtml> accessed 24 January 2023.

the Yushukan Museum result in a revisionist and controversial narrative. Nevertheless, Japanese memory of the war is nuanced, complicated, and contradicting. While the Yushukan Museum emphasizes Japanese militarism from an almost appreciating viewpoint and could therefore be categorized as a war museum, Japan promotes pacifist principles and opposes war as in the narrative exhibited at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. Hiroshima was the first city in the world to be hit by an atomic bomb dropped by American troops on August 6, 1945. The city was completely destroyed, and tens of thousands of people perished as a result. Hiroshima is a place that is heavily burdened with the history and memory of war and is collectively ingrained in people's memories and perceptions when they think of war. The museum's mission is to spread awareness of the terrible consequences and barbaric nature of nuclear weapons as well as the idea that they should never be used. The exhibition houses personal belongings of the deceased, testimony from survivors, and atomic bomb-related items.³³ The government decided to create a Peace memorial in 1949, and Hiroshima was chosen with the approval of more than 90% of the city's residents.³⁴ The government wanted to use Hiroshima as a representation of the aspiration of achieving enduring peace. This was done to promote and correlate with the ratification of Japan's new constitution, which emphasized pacifism.³⁵ The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum received its formal opening in 1955. The objects on display in the museum are the product of a collaborative effort by city residents who volunteered to collect items connected to the bombing.³⁶ The museum was expanded and renovated between the 1980s and 1990s, and it now consists of two buildings, one of which is devoted to the history of Hiroshima City before and after the bombing and the other to the display of an atomic bomb replica, personal items from the victims, and notions about the development of nuclear weapons.³⁷ In 2015, which also marked the bombing's 70th anniversary, the museum received a total of 1.495 million visitors, of which 338.891 were foreigners.³⁸ Proving that the museum is an important place for Japanese and world collective memory of the war. Furthermore, it demonstrates the broad range of influences on how people perceive war. Several monuments honouring the victims are located inside the park around the museum

³³ Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum website <https://hpmuseum.jp/?lang=eng> accessed 25 January 2023

³⁴ Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum History website https://hpmuseum.jp/modules/info/index.php?action=PageView&page_id=67&lang=eng accessed 25 January 2023

³⁵ Lee J. (2018). *Yasukuni and Hiroshima in Clash? War and Peace Museums in Contemporary Japan*. p.19

³⁶ Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum History website https://hpmuseum.jp/modules/info/index.php?action=PageView&page_id=67&lang=eng accessed 25 January 2023

³⁷ Lee J. (2018). *Yasukuni and Hiroshima in Clash? War and Peace Museums in Contemporary Japan*.

pp.19-20

³⁸ *ivi* p.20

and depict images from their suffering.³⁹ As a result, the visitor feels a tremendous sense of loss and connection to the deceased, and the brutality and terror of nuclear bombs are permanently imprinted in their minds. Although Hiroshima City today stands as a symbol of peace, the museum also dedicates a portion of the display to remembering its past as a military site. Furthermore, the Nanjing Massacre is mentioned in a report that details how the Japanese troops slaughtered Chinese people in 1937. The estimated death toll is also published, claiming that it is over 100,000 people, while also mentioning that the Chinese estimated the number of casualties to be about 300,000 people.⁴⁰ This is significant to notice since China and Japan have a strong disagreement on how many people were killed in the Nanjing massacre. Usually, a more revisionist account of history either dismisses the seriousness of the incident or downplays the number of deaths compared to what the Chinese government reported. In addition, the mention of Japanese complicity at the Nanjing massacre runs opposed to the narrative examined in the Yushukan Museum, which refers to the incident just briefly as "The Nanjing Incident" and expressly attributes Chinese culpability in the event. Strong visuals of the victims' suffering, such as pictures of the wounds and burns or burned objects caused by the explosion, help the museum fulfil its stated objectives of illustrating the horrors of the bomb and encouraging pacifism. Also mentioned and discussed are radiation side effects including leukaemia and cancer. The visitor experiences intense grief, heartbreak, and sentiments of disdain for nuclear weapons as a result of the narrative's intense focus on human suffering.⁴¹ The museum also briefly mentions non-Japanese victims, including Chinese and Southeast Asian students as well as American prisoners.⁴² The Hiroshima Peace Museum's display attempts to make visitors aware of the tragedy of nuclear weapons by claiming that there can be no peace with them. Hiroshima serves as a reminder of the atomic bomb's heinousness to the rest of the world. However, Lee contends that the message that world peace is only feasible without nuclear weapons sidesteps the issue of how to bring about world peace in other ways, particularly in light of the war crimes Japan has done against other nations.⁴³ The two museums analysed present two different but, in some respects, similar commemorations of the war. Aiming to educate and raise public awareness of the horrors of the bomb and the agony of innocent victims, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum contrasts the Yushukan Museum, which

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ *ivi* p.21

⁴¹ *ivi* p.22

⁴² *ivi* p.23

⁴³ *ivi* p.24

emphasizes on militarism and the honourable sacrifice of those who fought for Japan. Both effectively recall the events by carefully selecting the events and the way they are told to communicate the intended ideas. Both accomplish what they set out to do by appealing to the visitors' sensibilities and emotions in a way that leaves the narrative engraved in their memories. Finally, by concentrating primarily on Japanese suffering, both avoid addressing Japan's responsibilities and involvement in the war. As a result, the two museums both portray how the collective memory of the Japanese people during World War II is split between war and peace but unified by the burden of accepting responsibility and legacy as an aggressor in war.

China

While the Japanese commemoration of the war focuses on the heroic sacrifice of the Japanese while making little mention of the circumstances under which Japan was at war, the Chinese commemoration, on the other hand, is built around the values of Chinese resistance against the Japanese enemy thus openly pointing to Japan as the aggressor. Two examples of this are the Memorial Museum of the Chinese People's War of Resistance to Japan and the Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders. The choice of names, which already conveys the type of war narrative featured in the museums, may be the first thing noticed. The former, which introduces the Second Sino-Japanese War by utilizing the term "War of Resistance" that Chinese people frequently use to discuss it, illustrates how the conflict is remembered. The second, on the other hand, is striking as it clearly establishes from the beginning Japanese guilt and accountability for the Nanjing massacre. The word choice is significant not only for understanding the collective memory of the Chinese people regarding the war, but it also provides insight into how China feels about Japan because it appears to be attacking the ambiguous behaviour regarding the massacre by outright stating the "true" version of what happened. An illustration of the trend that, since the 1980s in China, has elevated the War of Resistance against Japan to the forefront of Chinese political discourse and collective memory is the Memorial Museum of the Chinese People's War of Resistance to Japan.⁴⁴ The museum was inaugurated on July 7, 1987, in Beijing, next to Lugouqiao, the Marco Polo Bridge, the location where the war started on July 7, 1937.⁴⁵ Through visual depictions and a collection of items from the conflict, the museum portrays the tale of Chinese resistance to the Japanese. Gustafsson points out that the intended visitors are mainly Chinese, as the narrative

⁴⁴ Mitter R. (2000). *Behind the Scenes at the Museum: Nationalism, History and Memory in the Beijing War of Resistance Museum, 1987-1997*, The China Quarterly. p. 279

⁴⁵ Gustafsson K. (2011). *Narratives and Bilateral Relations: Rethinking the 'History Issue' in Sino-Japanese Relations*. p. 168.

is done in the Chinese language and nationalistic terms such as “compatriots” are used.⁴⁶ Through the use of language, the visitor feels included in the narrative being told and is encouraged to participate. Therefore, the main goal of the museum is to strengthen national identity and social cohesion through the memory of the war. The museum clearly indicates why it is important to remember the specific historical event; the War of Resistance is a moment of national triumph that must be honoured in order to boost national pride and self-confidence, foster a sense of nationalism, and inspire Chinese people both inside and outside of China to work together to realize China's great revival.⁴⁷ The resistance battle therefore stands for a time of national triumph and unity that can be used as an inspiration for the present. The narrative presented at the museum is thus overly nationalistic. Periodically, the museum undergoes renovations that increase the number of photos and items on exhibit. Many people visit the museum, especially around the time of the anniversary of the start of the war. During the 70th anniversary commemoration of the Chinese triumph in 2015, the museum had more than 400,000 visitors in the months of July and August.⁴⁸ The Chinese narrative advocates the triumph of the War of Resistance with nationalist themes while also emphasizing its significance in the World War II campaign against fascism. This highlights the sacrifice made by the Chinese people not just for their country but for the entire world. Positive characteristics like honour, sacrifice, and moral uprightness are frequently employed to describe Chinese people. For this reason, the international support received by the Soviet Union and the United States is a testament to the moral Chinese values that are widely respected worldwide.⁴⁹ The exhibition of the museum favours the use of terminology that relate to groups, such as the Chinese nation, the Chinese Communist Party, and the Japanese military. The emphasis is mainly on Chinese groups thus emphasizing the “Chineseness” and national character of the narrative. In certain instances, specific individuals are also mentioned, such as Chiang Kai-shek or Chinese Communist Party leaders.⁵⁰ The Chinese Communist Party is highlighted in the story as the main character and the figurehead who led the resistance to triumph. Thus, it emphasizes its crucial role in bringing the Chinese people together and inspiring them to victory.⁵¹ In this sense, the memory of the Sino-Japanese War serves a number of purposes, acting both as a unifying force for the Chinese people and as a reinforcement for the Chinese Communist Party's

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ *ivi* pp.168-169

⁴⁸ https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/culture/2015-08/31/content_21758698.htm accessed 25 January 2023.

⁴⁹ Gustafsson K. (2011). *Narratives and Bilateral Relations: Rethinking the 'History Issue' in Sino-Japanese Relations*. p.179

⁵⁰ *ivi* p.180

⁵¹ *ivi* p.181

political legitimacy. The Chinese triumph serves as a motivating reminder of the nation's moral principles of sacrifice and solidarity. It also symbolizes the success of the Chinese country in reviving itself from the so-called “century of humiliation” and rebirth with all its might and cohesion on the international arena due to its historical contribution in the world battle against fascism.⁵² The horrendous crimes perpetrated by the Japanese on the Chinese population are also highlighted. Listed inside the museum are various crimes and atrocities committed by the Japanese military against the Chinese people. The terminology used emphasizes the negative depiction described of the Japanese characterized by cruelty and hideousness.⁵³ This is placed in contradiction of the positive moral values of the Chinese people. The narrative contrasts a dichotomy between the good guys, the Chinese, and the bad guys, the Japanese.⁵⁴ The museum also used to exhibit motorized wax sculptures depicting Japanese scientists using scalpels on living Chinese subjects contorting in agony in gruesome experiments.⁵⁵ These representations are reminiscent of the Unit 731 operations, which involved vivisection tests on humans, bacteriological tests, and tests of human endurance under a variety of harsh settings. These experiments were carried out by Japanese scientists on Chinese citizens. After the museum's 2005 renovation, the wax statues were removed.⁵⁶ Despite this, the museum continues to present in-depth representations of the atrocities carried out by the Japanese through written descriptions, photographs, and maps that show the locations of the massacres the Japanese carried out in China as well as the locations where Chinese people were taken away to perform forced labour. Places where the Japanese conducted scientific experiments on biological and chemical weapons are also mapped. As a result, the exhibition includes graphic depictions of Chinese corpses, tools used to torture Chinese, as well as the bones and skulls of victims.⁵⁷ The visuals are intended to arouse powerful emotions in the viewer, such as connection to the Chinese people and empathy for what they have gone through. The use of overtly violent imagery makes it easier for visitors to remember the events and reinforces animosity toward the Japanese. After 2005, however, the museum also includes a section devoted to post-war relations between China and Japan. This is the result of a joint effort and discussions between the foreign ministries of the two nations to rebuild friendly relations.⁵⁸ According to Denton,

⁵² *ivi op. cit.* p. 180

⁵³ *ivi* p.183

⁵⁴ *ivi* p.184

⁵⁵ Mitter R. (2000). *Behind the Scenes at the Museum: Nationalism, History and Memory in the Beijing War of Resistance Museum, 1987-1997.* *op.cit.* p.279

⁵⁶ Gustafsson K. (2011). *Narratives and Bilateral Relations: Rethinking the ‘History Issue’ in Sino-Japanese Relations.* p.185

⁵⁷ *ivi* p.184

⁵⁸ *ivi* p.185

the international trend in World War II storytelling, which is primarily influenced by Holocaust museums, includes China's habit of displaying graphically brutal pictures of atrocities.⁵⁹ In this way, China feel it is acceptable to openly remember this shameful and terrible episode in their history by equating the Nanjing massacre and the Unit 731 experiments with the Holocaust. Furthermore, Denton asserts that Japanese monuments commemorating the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs influenced Chinese museums and memorials dedicated to Japanese war crimes.⁶⁰ The Museum of the War of Chinese People's Resistance Against Japanese Aggression is undoubtedly an important place of remembrance for the Chinese community as highly attended commemorations are held there every year by the people to remember the outbreak of the war.⁶¹ Similarly, the Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre By Japanese Invaders also represents one of the central sites for the Chinese collective memory of the Second Sino-Japanese War. Millions of people travel from all over the world to visit the museum, which was inaugurated on August 15, 1985, the 40th anniversary of the end of the war. Over ninety million people have visited the attraction between its opening and 2017. Furthermore, Memorial Hall has been used since 2014 to host annual national remembrances on December 13 in honour of the victims.⁶² The Memorial Hall of the Victims in the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders is made up of many buildings where many primary historical records, artifacts, and photographs are displayed. These buildings are complemented by sculptures, public memorial squares, cemetery squares, victory squares, and peace parks.⁶³ It is significant to note that both of the examined museums were constructed on already established places of memory, i.e., they were constructed at the locations of the events they commemorate: the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall was constructed at the site where the massacre took place, while the War of Resistance museum was constructed where the war actually started. The later-constructed museums serve as testaments to the memory of the events that occurred there and transmit it to future generations through museum exhibits. The Nanjing Museum's objective is to commemorate the victims of the Nanjing Massacre and spread awareness of the event internationally. The Memorial Hall includes two additional displays in addition to the one on the history of the Nanjing Massacre: one on military comfort women and the other on the

⁵⁹ Denton, K. (2013). *Exhibiting the Past: Historical Memory and the Politics of Museums in Postsocialist China*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.p.138

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202207/1270017.shtml> accessed 24 January 2023.

⁶² Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders website http://www.19371213.com.cn/en/about/museum/202007/t20200710_2236058.html accessed 24 January 2023.

⁶³ *ibid.*

triumph of the Chinese people in their war of resistance against Japan.⁶⁴ The museum also serves as a burial site for the victims of the massacre, which are respectfully displayed.⁶⁵ The museum commemorates the history of the Nanjing Massacre and the War of Resistance period through displays of images, objects, and videos. There is a substantial collection of objects at the museum that demonstrate the crimes done by the Japanese troops, and more relics are constantly added. By the end of December 2022, there were 453 additional pieces of evidence supporting war crimes, including proof of the comfort stations where military comfort women were kept, proof of bacteriological experiments, and proof of the militaristic education that Japanese soldiers provided to children in Nanjing. Additionally, a Japanese soldier's journal was discovered, in which the construction of comfort stations was described.⁶⁶ Through emotionally stirring visuals like sculptures stressing the anguish and innocence of the victims, a list of the names of the victims, and chambers filled with the remains of the dead, the museum tells the tale of the suffering of the massacre victims. One sculpture that shows a woman carrying a dead child stands out among the other sculptures of the victims, striking the viewer with intense sadness.⁶⁷ Additionally, a sign that reads "300 thousand victims" effectively states the number of casualties.⁶⁸ This is a blatant rebuttal to the revisionist claims made by the Japanese right wing that minimize the number of massacre victims. Furthermore, there are areas set aside for commemorating and contemplating on the tragedy of the event and the suffering of the victims.⁶⁹ The memorial thus presents a solemn tone of respect for the memory of the victims reminiscent of Holocaust memorials. Dull colours that create the impression of being inside a real tomb is the aesthetics' defining feature.⁷⁰ Even within Memorial Hall, terminology like "compatriot" are utilized that imply collective identity and nationalist characteristics, as was earlier noticed at the War of Resistance Museum.⁷¹ By experiencing a feeling of belonging and participation in the remembrance, this enables the visitor to recognize the event as a component of the community. The museum thus memorializes the event with national characters that allow the visitor to engage and participate in the collective memory of the event. As a venue for performances, exhibits, ceremonies with living witnesses, and art installations, Denton contends that Memorial Hall serves as an active site for memorialization. As a result,

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

⁶⁶ <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202212/1280945.shtml> accessed 24 January 2023.

⁶⁷ Denton, K. (2013). *Exhibiting the Past: Historical Memory and the Politics of Museums in Postsocialist China*. p. 147

⁶⁸ *ivi* p. 145

⁶⁹ *ivi op. cit.* p.147

⁷⁰ *ivi* p.144

⁷¹ *ivi* p.146

Memorial Hall performs the function of an active memorial site by encouraging community participation in remembering in various ways.⁷² The museums under consideration commemorate the war era by emphasizing the ideas of justice and unity as well as the sacrifice of the Chinese people by contrasting them against the Japanese army, which is regarded as an invader with negative characteristics. A political element is also prominent in the commemoration as the role played by the Chinese Communist Party in the Chinese triumph against the Japanese is emphasized. Additionally, the commemoration of the conflict involves evaluating the contemporary while using the past as a guide and source of inspiration. Furthermore, it is noticeable that the memorialization is laced with anti-Japanese feelings and serves as a demand for accountability from Japan as the nation responsible for atrocities against the Chinese people.

South Korea

As it has previously been observed in China and Japan, museums play a significant role in forming collective memories and fostering patriotism in South Korea as well. The historical depictions of Japan's colonial era that may be found in museums are infused with feelings of suffering and national resistance. The collective memory and its manifestation in cultural media have come to be associated with anti-Japanese attitudes and victimization, as Kingston observes, as a result of the Japanese conduct of dealing with its shared past with Korea in an evasive and ambiguous manner.⁷³ In Seoul, at the Seoul Museum of History there is a permanent exhibit regarding the colonial period. Opened in 2002, the Seoul Museum of History aims to educate visitors about the history of the city of Seoul. In addition, the museum aims to preserve the city's culture and history to strengthen the cultural identity of its citizens and promote a collective spirit. The history museum in Seoul clearly indicates that it wants to serve as a site of commemoration and collective memory for the purpose of fostering and enhancing the sense of national identity.⁷⁴ The exhibition chronicles Korea's period as a Japanese colony from 1910-1945 through photographs and artifacts of the time. The narrative emphasizes the living conditions of Koreans under the colonial government characterized by discrimination against Korean people and hardships. In addition, the exhibition devotes a section focusing on the

⁷² Denton, K. (2013). *Exhibiting the Past: Historical Memory and the Politics of Museums in Postsocialist China*. pp.146-147

⁷³ Kingston, J. (2014). *Museums, Manga, Memorials and Korean-Japanese History Wars*. *Asian Studies*, 2(2), p.47

⁷⁴ Seoul Museum of History website <https://museum.seoul.go.kr/eng/about/mission.jsp> accessed 24 January 2023.

national resistance movement to the Japanese government.⁷⁵ Visitors are incited to harbour emotions of animosity and hatred towards Japan as a result of the detailed portrayals of the oppressive conditions and atrocities committed by the Japanese. In this way, the anti-Japanese component of Korean nationalism is developed.⁷⁶ In this regard, there are parallels between Korean and Chinese museums in that both emphasize atrocities in detail in their accounts of the crimes committed by the Japanese. In this way, there is no doubt that there is resentment toward Japan ingrained in the collective memory of the two nations. In contrast to Chinese museums, Kingston notes that Korean museums focus on the brutality of colonial tyranny and the unwaveringly brave Korean resistance rather than precisely highlighting the humiliations faced to motivate the people to be strong in the present.⁷⁷ In 2012 another museum was opened in Seoul, the National Museum of Korean Contemporary History, which displays a permanent collection devoted to the period between 1894 and 1945, thus including the period of Japanese colonialism. This section is dedicated to the Korean struggle for freedom and independence. The museum chronicles the story and honours the memory of those who fought for Korea's independence through pictures, objects, videos, and interactive activities for visitors. Furthermore, the museum also makes use of spatial representations, such as confined spaces and low ceilings, to suggest the oppression and exploitation experienced by the Korean people while living under Japanese authority. Along the route, there are also barriers and obstructions that represent the challenges the Korean country faced on its journey to freedom and independence. The displays detail the numerous injustices that the Korean people suffered as a result of Japanese colonial control, from being forced to adopt Japanese names in place of their Korean names to being coerced to enlist as soldiers, workers, or military comfort women.⁷⁸ The museum also stands as a place of memory through cultural events commemorating crucial moments in Korean history such as the March First Independence Movement and August 15, the day commemorates Korean liberation from the Japanese.⁷⁹ The exhibit on display in the National Museum of Korean Contemporary History recounts the history of Korea as a process from Koreans reclaiming their country as their own to becoming a modern democratic nation. As a result, the memory of the years 1910 to 1945 is remembered as a significant time that should not be overlooked but is included into contemporary Korean history as a whole rather

⁷⁵ *ibid.*

⁷⁶ Kingston, J. (2014). *Museums, Manga, Memorials and Korean-Japanese History Wars*. p.48

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ National Museum of Korean Contemporary History website
<https://www.much.go.kr/en/contents.do?fid=02&cid=01> accessed 24 January 2023.

⁷⁹ National Museum of Korean Contemporary History website
https://www.much.go.kr/en/culturalEvent_en.do?fid=03&cid=02

than as a distinct period. Therefore, unlike the museums specifically dedicated to the conflict in China and Japan. Although smaller and less well-known than the other two museums mentioned earlier, it is still feasible to discover museums specifically focused to the colonial era in Korea. One such museum is the Museum of Japanese Colonial History in Korea, which was established in 2018. The museum contains a collection of objects about the colonial period including even an original copy of the March 1 Declaration of Independence. The museum receives a large influx of visitors on Korean Independence Day as people come to learn more about the country's history and pay respect to the fallen liberators.⁸⁰ The Ahn Jung geun Memorial Museum in Seoul is another prominent place for commemorating the colonial era. Ahn Jung geun was a Korean independence activist who on October 26, 1909, assassinated Ito Hirobumi, former prime minister of Japan and first resident-general of Korea and for this reason considered a symbol of Japanese imperialist aggression. After Ito's murder, Russian officials arrested Ahn and gave him over to the authorities of the Japanese colony. He was executed in 1910 after being held at Lushun Prison.⁸¹ Ahn is celebrated and remembered as a national hero and martyr for the homeland in both South and North Korea.⁸² A memorial has also been erected in the Chinese city of Harbin, the location of Ito's shooting, to honour Ahn. The activist is regarded in Japan as being an anti-Japanese terrorist, and as a result, the Chinese decision to recognize the Korean independence activist has also received criticism.⁸³ As a testament to his central place in the Korean people's collective memory of their fight to Japanese colonization, Ahn has regularly been honoured in Korea over the years in a variety of ways, including through books, films, and other media.⁸⁴ The memorial dedicated to Ahn Jung geun was first opened in 1970, and then replaced with a new one in 2010 with the task of honouring and telling the story and thought of the Korean activist through Ahn's objects and writings. Ahn is remembered as a symbol of Korean resistance as well as for the ideas he developed in his book "On Peace in Asia" about a pan-Asian peace regime that was regionalist and supranational in its approach to regulating ties between China, Korea, and Japan. Ahn had a vision of a coalition in which China, Japan, and Korea would collaborate with one another militarily and economically, allowing all three nations to advance while retaining their own independence.⁸⁵ Messages written in Ahn's

⁸⁰ <https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190815000126> accessed 26 January 2023.

⁸¹ Ernst M. (2020). *On Shifting a Nation's Collective Memory: The Role of Ahn Jung-geun in South Korea's Foreign Policy*, Asian Journal of Peacebuilding Vol. 8 No. 2. p. 376.

⁸² *ivi* p. 373

⁸³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-25808437> accessed 27 January 2023.

⁸⁴ https://koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/11/398_340499.html accessed 27 January 2023.

⁸⁵ Ernst M. (2020). *On Shifting a Nation's Collective Memory: The Role of Ahn Jung-geun in South Korea's Foreign Policy*. *op. cit.* p. 376

handwriting and handprints with a missing finger to supply blood as a replacement for ink that was used to create a flag that says "Korean Independence" are hung at the entrance to the museum.⁸⁶ In order to capture Ahn's sense of patriotism, the flag with blood on it is hung below the monument of the activist. The museum additionally includes a re-enactment of the murder and trial, the gun utilized, and a reproduction of his severed finger.⁸⁷ The choice of artifacts conveys in the visitor Ahn's devotion to his country and Korean independence. Kingston observes that Ahn's pan-Asian peace ideas are overshadowed by the museum's primary emphasis on the assassination and patriotic movement.⁸⁸ A Shinto shrine to Emperor Meiji and the goddess Amaterasu stood on the spot where the museum now stands. Attendance was required of Koreans throughout the colonial era. The altar was destroyed after Korea gained independence as it was a reminder of the cultural assimilation the Japanese imposed on the Korean people during their time as colonial subjects.⁸⁹ As a result, the location formerly symbolized a site of remembrance associated with Japanese imperialism but is now a symbol of Korean nationalism and resistance. In addition to the commemoration of Korean resistance through figures such as Ahn Jung geun, the commemoration of the colonial period is marked by the figure of military comfort women. Military comfort women were controversial to discuss before to the 1990s. The pain and exploitation endured by comfort women were later brought to light owing to a mobilization that got its start after Kim Hak Soon's statement in 1991 and entered into public conversation. Initiatives have so been launched to pay tribute to the comfort women and bring them to justice. As a result, House of Sharing was founded in 1992 and later relocated to Gwangju with the goal of providing care for women who were sexually exploited by the Japanese army between 1930 and 1945. Given that the practice also affected females from other nations, the worldwide purpose of House of Sharing extends beyond establishing connections with comfort women in Korea. Additionally, in order to remember Korean victims, House of Sharing partakes in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register initiative. The Korean government supports the House of Sharing, which organizes weekly rallies in front of the Japanese Embassy to seek a formal apology from the Japanese government in memory of the comfort women.⁹⁰ Thus, making it an active place of commemoration. Since 1998, a museum devoted to the Japanese military's practice of forced prostitution has also been

⁸⁶ Kingston, J. (2014). *Museums, Manga, Memorials and Korean-Japanese History Wars*. p. 58

⁸⁷ *ivi* p. 59

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

⁸⁹ *ivi* p. 60

⁹⁰ <https://www.cipdh.gob.ar/memorias-situadas/en/lugar-de-memoria/la-casa-del-compartir-y-el-museo-de-la-esclavitud-sexual-por-el-ejercito-japones/> accessed 27 January 2023.

established. A quotation from Kim Hak Soon on the value of preserving and remembering comfort women is included in the museum section, which pays tribute to Kim as the first comfort woman to openly oppose the practice.⁹¹ This explicitly states the museum's dedication to preserving the memories of the comfort women through archives and exhibitions in order to permanently engrave the torture these women endured at the hands of the Japanese military in the collective memory. The Museum of Sexual Slavery by Japanese Military is the first museum in the world whose entire objective is to memorialize the sexual exploitation that the Japanese military has been associated with in throughout history. In order to teach visitors about the past and honour the deceased victims, the museum exhibits several documents. Two levels of the museum feature testimony of Korean and non-Korean women who were victims of this practice, as well as a number of documents attesting to Japan's involvement in this practice. The museum serves as a compilation of testimony to make the event indisputable since the museum explicitly accuses Japan of denying the affair.⁹² Along with a collection of artifacts and written recollections, the museum also employs use of victim-created artwork and reproductions of comfort station rooms to enable visitors comprehend the situations and emotions of military comfort women. As observed in preceding examinations of monuments, the museum dedicated to comfort women adopts similar strategies and imagery to induce an emotional response, which enhances the effectiveness of memory transmission to the visitor. The comfort women are an important part of Korean memory as they stand for the oppression and abuse that occurred under colonialism. They also stand for the struggle to achieve resolution and justice for this difficult past in the contemporary. The Statues of Peace, which are statues featuring comfort women, are another illustration of memorials devoted to them. The first statue was erected in Seoul, South Korea, in front of the Japanese Embassy in 2011. Subsequently, more sculptures of a similar design were erected around the country, and then eventually around the world.⁹³ The Statue of Peace portrays a barefooted girl wearing traditional Korean clothing gazing towards the Japanese embassy while clutching her fists, signifying the demand for an apology from Japan.⁹⁴ The statues built thanks to activist groups for the cause of comfort women have been the focus of controversy and protests by officials of the Japanese government, especially right-wingers. As of 2022, there are 90 Statues of Peace around the world and have come to represent not only the memory of the suffering endured by the estimated 200,000 comfort

⁹¹House of Sharing website <http://www.nanum.org/mobile/en/sub05.php> accessed 27 January 2023.

⁹² *ibid.*

⁹³ Shim D. (2021). *Memorials' politics: Exploring the material rhetoric of the Statue of Peace*, Memory studies, p. 1.

⁹⁴ *ivi* p. 3

women but also a worldwide symbol of survivors of sexual abuse and wartime violence.⁹⁵ In this way, the commemoration of the comfort women transcends Korean national borders by elevating the memory of the event to a global level. One could argue that the memorial dedicated to the world bomb in Hiroshima also accomplishes a similar mission, despite the fact that the memorial is located in Japan, is set to remember the effects of the atomic bomb on a global scale.

⁹⁵ <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/comfort-women-japan-korea-germany/#:~:text=The%20statue%20symbolizes%20the%20estimated,to%20keep%20the%20girl%20company> accessed 28 January 2023.

CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this thesis sought to provide a theoretical contribution to the study of memory and its impact on international relations. To achieve this end, South Korea, China, and Japan were used as research examples, selected as nations where memory is a source of diplomatic tension. The three countries under consideration are marked by a common past of war and colonialism in the period from 1910 to 1945. The Pacific War, the Second Sino-Japanese War, and Japan's colonial control over Korea were all significant developments that shaped the three contemporary states. The three nations are often referred to as being at the centre of a "history problem." Although the common history among the three countries is marked by the experience of war and colonialism, I argue that the conflict in the present is caused by the commemorations created by each country. I drew on the concepts of collective memory introduced by Maurice Halbwachs and cultural memory developed by Jan and Aleida Assmann to investigate how memory was constituted in the three nations. I therefore analysed the construction and manipulation of memory in the three countries by investigating three of the media of memory transmission as identified by Aleida Assmann: writing, images, and places. Memory is a reconstruction of the past that can be guided and manipulated. Given that memory is a key notion in the construction of national cohesiveness and identity, thus, the study of memory must be taken into consideration in political science and international relations. It is crucial for both local and foreign politics, but more research is needed to understand how it affects foreign relations. It is noticeable from the media analysis that each nation's national identity and memory are inextricably interwoven. Additionally, it is established that the memorialization depicted in the various media contributes to conflict in the modern scenario. The current diplomatic tension results from the selection of historical events that are highlighted, as well as from how those events are depicted and communicated to the populace. The problem at the heart of memorialization is the different storytelling constructed by each nation that struggle to coexist and reconcile. Thus, a narrative about memory is established in each country that struggles to reconcile with the ones constructed by neighbouring countries. The narratives selected are those that focus more on events pertaining to the nation itself than to other nations since they are meant to help shape and solidify a nation's political and national identity. However, the national story may also be developed as an opposition to that of another country. This is the case, for example, with China and South Korea, which have shaped the memories of their own people in antithesis to the Japanese nation. In the three study case nations, there

are different perspectives that are challenging to reconcile when examining the media that transmit memory and shapes it. In China we find a memorisation marked by the Sino-Japanese war period infused with animosity towards the Japanese nation. At the same time, the memory of the war is also infused with feelings of national pride that foster social cohesion. The memory of the war in China is also a source of political legitimacy as the focal role of the Chinese Communist Party in leading China to victory against Japan and in the international arena is emphasised. Similar to China, South Korea has established its national identity in opposition to Japan. This is a result of the memories of the colonial era, which was characterized by the abuse of military comfort women and the deprivation of sovereignty. Despite this, the Korean narrative places less emphasis than China on antagonising Japan. However, there is still a strong desire in Korea for retribution and restitution for the atrocities perpetrated by Japan, particularly with relation to the exploitation of military comfort women and forced labour. While Chinese and Korean narratives are more politicised, the narrative in Japan is more detached and neutral. It is a symptom of a society that is unable to reconcile and take responsibility for its past. In Japan, the narrative focuses mainly on the effects of the war on the Japanese population, avoiding mention of the role played and the crimes committed during the war. For this reason, Japan's commemoration is a source of dispute and criticism. Because China and Korea are Confucianist states and regard history as having a moral and pedagogical purpose, there are differences in how the three nations portray the past. The three nations also exhibit historical revisionist tendencies, which promote ultra-nationalist ideologies and hostility among the countries. As a result, the commemoration of the era 1910–1945 is proficiently designed for political aims, of which the most crucial is to reinforce national identity. The media that were examined, such as writing, images, and locations, are critical for the transmission of memory throughout society. These memories are created in a way that makes them primarily helpful for internal politics while also exacerbating diplomatic tensions, particularly when it comes to Japan. In conclusion, I contend that in order to comprehend the political dynamics of the area, it is critical to investigate and examine the notion of memory in connection to the foreign relations of East Asian countries. The different media analysed present three distinct and different memorialization of the past as they are each mainly related to their own nation. Therefore, it is difficult to be able to intersect the three memories as they focus on different aspects and recount the same time period in different ways. Essentially, the Korean and Chinese memories struggle to coexist with the Japanese one making reconciliation difficult. Until Japan displays a narrative of the past including Chinese and Korean experiences and owning its responsibility as aggressor, the diplomatic tensions are bound to happen.

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